

Assessment of the level of knowledge on autism among the mothers of toddlers in selected village, kanchipuram district, Tamil nadu, India.

ABSTRACT

Background: Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication and by restricted and repetitive behavior. Mothers of toddlers should have knowledge on Autism to identify the child in earlier age and to treat the child. **Objectives:** The study aimed to assess the level of knowledge on autism among the mothers of toddlers. The objectives were to find out the level of knowledge on autism among the mothers and to find out the association between the level of knowledge on autism and selected demographic variables of the mothers of toddlers. **Materials and Methods:** A non-experimental, descriptive study was conducted. The sampling technique was snow ball sampling technique with the sample of 50 mothers of toddlers and questionnaires were formulated, a structured interview schedule was used to assess the level of knowledge on autism among the mothers of toddlers. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. The data collection procedure was done for period of 2 weeks. The study was initiated after obtaining prior permission from the concern authorities. **Results:** The study shows that 76% of the mothers of toddlers were having inadequate knowledge and 24% of the mothers of toddlers were having adequate knowledge on autism. There was no significant association between the level of knowledge on autism and selected demographic variables of mothers of toddlers.

KEY WORDS: Knowledge, Autism, Mothers of toddlers.

1

INTRODUCTION

Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior. Parents often notice signs during the first three years of their child's life.^(1,2)

These signs often develop gradually, though some children with autism experience worsening in their communication and social skills after reaching developmental milestones at a normal pace.⁽³⁾

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior. Although autism can be diagnosed at any age, it is said to be a "developmental disorder" because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life.⁽⁴⁾

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), a guide created by the American Psychiatric Association used to diagnose mental disorders, people with ASD have difficulty with communication and interaction with other people, restricted interests and repetitive behaviors, symptoms that hurt the person's ability to function properly in school, work, and other areas of life.⁽⁵⁾

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In 2013 worldwide, autism is estimated to affect 21.7 million people. Recent estimated prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder in India ranges from 0.15% to 1.01% in various studies, depending on the

screening method used, and the areas surveyed. In the INCLLEN study, the prevalence of ASD (then termed as PDD) was 1 in 125 in children 3-6 years and 1 in 85 in children 6-9 years of age. The prevalence in rural areas was 0.90%, 0.6% in hilly regions, 1.01% in urban areas, 0.1% in tribal areas and 0.61% in the coastal regions. 10 million children likely to suffer from autism in India 1- 1.5 % or 1 in 66 children between ages 2 and 9 are affected 1 in 500 children was the estimate until now. It occurs four to five times more often in boys than girls. ⁽⁶⁾

Researchers felt need regard to conducting this study as follows: Mothers are the prime care taker during this period, but most of the autism kids were diagnosed after they cross the toddler period. Mothers should have knowledge regarding autism to understand the difference between a normal child and autistic child. This will help them to take consultation for early diagnosis and for further treatment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

A descriptive study to assess the level of knowledge on Autism among the mothers of toddlers in Poonjeri village, Kanchipuram district, Tamil Nadu, India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess the level of knowledge on autism among the mothers of toddlers.
2. To find out the association between the level of knowledge on autism and selected demographic variables of the mothers of toddlers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Research Approach: Quantitative approach was adopted for the study.

Research Design: Non-experimental descriptive research design was adopted to carry out the study.

Research Setting: The study was conducted in Poonjeri village, Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu, India.

Population: The population of the study were mothers of toddlers residing in selected community setting, Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu, India.

Sampling Technique: Snow ball sampling technique was used to selected the study participants.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Inclusion Criteria:

- The mothers who were having children in the age of 1 -3 Years
- The mothers of toddlers who were available at the time of data collection.
- The mothers who were willing to participate.
- The mothers who can understand and speak Tamil.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Mothers those who were not having toddler.

SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY INSTRUMENT

SECTION - A

Self - Structured tool consists of demographic variables such as age, religion, educational qualification, occupation, number of children, history of Autism in the family and previous knowledge on Autism of mothers of toddlers.

SECTION - B

Structured Interview schedule was used to assess the level of knowledge regarding autism among mothers of toddlers which consists of 20 multiple choice questions with 4 options among which one was correct option.

SCORING INTERPRETATION:

Table 1: Score grading for testing the level of Knowledge

SCORE	PERCENTAGE	LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE
Less than 06	0 - 30%	Inadequate
07-13	31 - 65%	Moderately adequate
14-20	66 -100%	Adequate

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher conducted a personal interview to collect personal information and their level of knowledge on Autism using Structured Interview schedule among mothers of Toddlers. Data collection for the period of 2 weeks with prior permission and after getting written consent participants for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS Descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage were used. Inferential statistical like mean, standard deviation and chi-square test also used to analyze the data.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:

The research proposal was approved by the Department of Mental Health Nursing, Chettinad College of Nursing and Institutional Human Ethical Committee of Chettinad Academy of Research & Education. The study purpose was explained to the study participants and an informed consent obtained from them in written before the data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results states that majority of mothers of toddlers (76%) were in the age group of 17-20 years, majority of mothers belong to Hindu religion (70%), more than half of the mothers have higher secondary educational qualification (54%), Majority of mothers have two children (66%), most of the mothers were house wives (88%), no family history of Autism reported in their family (100%) and No mothers have previous knowledge on Autism (100%).

Table: 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of level of knowledge on Autism among mothers of toddlers. (N =50)

S. N O	LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE	NUMBER OF MOTHERS OF TODDLERS	TOTAL NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	SCORE RANGE	TOTAL SCORE		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	KNOWLEDGE PERCENTAGE	
									INDIVIDUAL	TOTAL
1	ADEQUATE	-	-	14-20	12	-	6.82	7.5	24%	-
2	MODERATE	50	20	07 - 13	0	422	-	-	0%	100%
3	INADEQUATE	-	-	Less than 06	38	-	-	-	76%	-

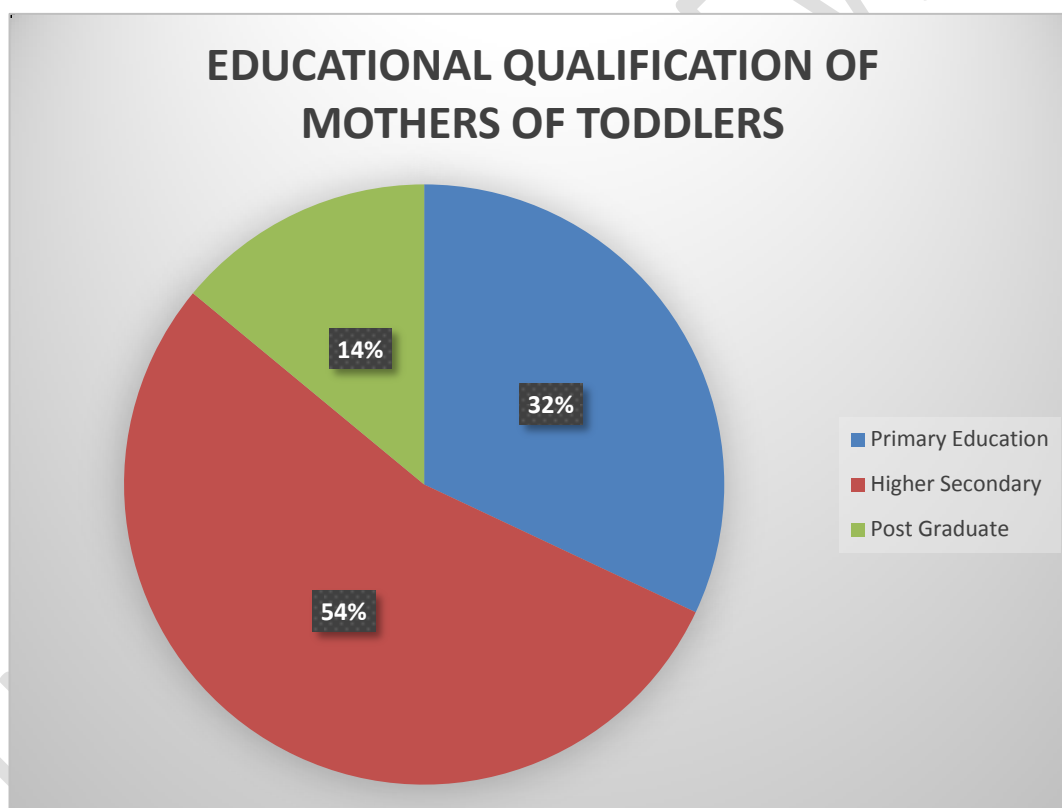


Figure: 1 Percentage distribution of mothers of toddlers based on their educational qualification.

Association of demographic variables of mothers of toddlers with their level knowledge on Autism.

The study findings revealed that there was no significant association between level of knowledge and demographic variables such as age, religion, educational qualification, occupation, number of children, history of Autism in the family and previous knowledge on Autism of mothers of toddlers at $p < 0.01$ level.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed that 76% of the mothers of toddlers had inadequate knowledge and only 24% had adequate knowledge on autism. The demographic data reveals that no mothers had previous knowledge on Autism. The study recommended that it is must to provide knowledge on autism to the mothers of toddlers by distributing pamphlets or educating them through mass media campaigns in the community setting.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Chettinad Academy of Research and Education, Institutional Human Ethics Committee on 13.01.2016.

REFERENCES:

1. Landa RJ. Diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders in the first 3 years of life. *Nature Clinical Practice Neurology*. 2008 Mar;4(3):138-47.
2. Edition F. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. Am Psychiatric Assoc. 2013;21.
3. Stefanatos GA. Regression in autistic spectrum disorders. *Neuropsychology review*. 2008 Dec 1;18(4):305-19.
4. Neeraja KP. Essentials of mental health and psychiatric nursing. JAYPEE BROTHERS PUBLISHERS; 2008.
5. Mathews TL, Lugo AM, King ML, Needelman LL, McArdle PE, Romer N, Terry M, Menousek K, Evans JH, Higgins WJ. Expanding access to clinical services for toddlers with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*. 2018 Mar 1;32(2):173-83.
6. Tyagi V, Juneja M, Jain R. Sleep problems and their correlates in children with autism spectrum disorder: An Indian study. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*. 2019 Mar;49(3):1169-81.