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Effectiveness of a Training Package on Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Conduct Disorder in Children among School Teachers in South India

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Abstract

Background: Conduct disorder is prevalent among school going children; teachers have a pivotal role in promoting good behaviour and are also responsible for early identification and management of behavioural problems in children.

Objective: To assess the effectiveness of a training package on the knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers.

Material and Methods: A quasi experimental study was conducted at selected schools in Villupuram. 60 school teachers were selected by the non-probability convenient sampling technique. The researcher used a structured knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale for collecting the data and administered a training package on conduct disorder (lecture cum discussion, video show, demonstration and pamphlet) to school teachers.

Results: The findings of the study showed that in the experimental group, the post test mean score of knowledge was 20.03 with an S.D of 2.18 and post test attitude was 60.26 with an S.D of 5.36; whereas in the control group, the post test mean score of knowledge was 10.90 with an S.D of 3.88 and post test attitude was 46.36 with an S.D of 7.97. The calculated 't' value for knowledge was 11.209 and for attitude was 7.921, which indicated that there was a high statistically significant difference in post test level of knowledge and attitude between the experimental and control groups.

Conclusions: The study concluded that awareness about conduct disorder in school teachers will help to identify conduct disorder in its earliest stage, prevent the negative consequences of behavioural problems and encourage the seeking of help from mental health professionals.

Key words: Training package, knowledge, attitude, conduct disorder of children, school teachers.

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Introduction

Children experience many physical, mental, and emotional changes as they progress through their natural growth and development. Common mental disorders that can affect children include anxiety disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), disruptive behaviour disorder, pervasive development disorders, eating disorder, affective disorder and learning and communication disorders.

Behavioral disorders are also known as disruptive behavioral disorder which includes ADHD, conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder^[1]. Conduct disorder is more prevalent among school going children^[2], and is seen more commonly in boys than in girls^[3]. In the 21st century, where both are employed, parents face the jeopardy of managing time between work and child upbringing. This situation has led to a decrease in time spent by parents with their children, which in turn has led to the increase in conduct disorder. There was a significant difference in behaviour between pupils whose parents are separated as compared to pupils staying with parents^[3], and family psychopathology also has a positive correlation with the severity of conduct disorder^[4].

Children with conduct disorder usually behave against a societal norm, which is not encouraged in our culture. Educational failure, low religiosity, harsh physical punishment and abuse, parental mental health problem, single parent family and low socioeconomic status were the risk factors for conduct disorder^[5]. The child with conduct disorder develops comorbid mental illness like ADHD and Oppositional deviant disorder^[6].

Children exhibit symptoms in the school but unfortunately because of lack of awareness, teachers fail to identify them early and refer them for medical help to prevent further complications. School based interventions involving the teacher are very useful in preventing conduct disorder and improving the child's social and emotional competence^[7]. The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of a training package on knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder of children among school teachers at selected settings in Villupuram.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess and compare the pre and post test level of knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers in the experimental and control groups.
2. To assess the effectiveness of a training package on level of knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers between the experimental and control group.
3. To correlate the post test level of knowledge score with attitude score regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers in the experimental group.
4. To associate the selected demographic variables with their pre and post test mean score of knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers in the experimental and control groups.

Hypotheses

NH₁: There is no significant difference between the pre and post test level of knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers between the experimental and control groups at $p < 0.05$ level.

NH₂: There is no significant correlation between post test level of knowledge score with attitude score regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers in the experimental group at $p < 0.05$ level.

NH₃: There is no significant association of selected demographic variables with their pre and post test mean score of knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers in the experimental and control groups at $p < 0.05$ level.

Materials and Methods

A quasi experimental study was carried out at selected schools in South India, between June 2015 and December 2016. The samples were recruited from government higher secondary schools. A total of 60 school teachers who could understand Tamil or English and who were handling children in the age group of 11-17 years were selected by the non-probability convenient sampling technique. School teachers who had already undergone a similar training package within the previous 6 months were excluded. The demographic variables were collected individually by interview method. The researcher assessed the knowledge and attitude of the school teachers by using a structured knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale. A structured knowledge questionnaire on conduct disorder was developed by the researcher which consisted of 25 items. The attitude scale is a 5 point likert scale consisting of 15 statements (7 positive items and 8 negative items).

The researcher administered a training package to school teachers in the experimental group which included a lecture cum discussion on conduct disorder, a video show on signs and symptoms, and a demonstration on video assisted thought field therapy; and followed it by the administration of a modified conduct disorder screening tool. Finally, the researchers clarified the queries of the school teachers and pamphlets were given to all the study participants for reinforcement. The post test was conducted by using the same structured knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale. After the post test, the wait list control group was taught about the training package. The reliability of the structured knowledge questionnaire was 0.97 and for attitude scale, it was 0.94.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Review Board. Formal permission was obtained from The Headmasters of government schools. The researchers explained the purpose of the research study and informed consent was obtained from the school teachers. The researchers maintained confidentiality throughout the data collection and maintained justice by providing intervention to the experimental and control group.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Programme (SPSS) version 17.0. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the demographic variables. Paired 't' test was used to compare the pre and post test level of knowledge and attitude among school teachers in experimental and control group. Unpaired 't' test was used to compare the post test level of knowledge and attitude among school teachers between experimental and control group. Karl Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the post test level of knowledge and attitude in experimental group. One way ANOVA was used to find the association between the level of knowledge, attitude and the demographic variables.

Results

In the experimental group, 33.33% of the school teachers were in the age group of 20-30 years and 56.67% were male. 86.67% belong to the Hindu religion and 70% of them were married. 73.33% of them had completed B.Ed and 50% were earning above Rs.18000 to \geq Rs.36017. 50% of them belong to nuclear families.

In the control group, 50% of the school teachers were in the age group of 41-50 years and 53.33% were male. 63.33% belong to the Hindu religion and 96.67% of them were married. 50% of them had completed M.Ed and 83.33% were earning Rs.≥36017 and 76.67% of them belong to nuclear families.

The pre and post test level of knowledge and attitude in the experimental and control groups are depicted in **Figure 1 and 2**. Results revealed that in the experimental group, the pre test mean score of knowledge was 10.50 with an S.D of 3.45 and post test mean score of knowledge was 20.03 with an S.D of 2.18 ($t=15.307, p=0.001$). The pre test mean score of attitude was 43.0 with an S.D of 6.56 and post test mean score of attitude was 60.26 with an S.D of 5.36 ($t=11.457, p=0.001$).

In the control group, the pre test mean score of knowledge was 10.86 with an S.D of 3.87 and the post test mean score of knowledge was 10.90 with an S.D of 3.88 ($t=0.441, p=0.662$). The pre test mean score of attitude was 46.36 with an S.D of 7.97 and the post test mean score of attitude was 46.36 with an S.D of 7.97 ($t=1.439, p=0.161$). The results also revealed that there was a high positive correlation between the knowledge and attitude of school teachers in the experimental group. [**Table 1**]

Table 1: Correlation between post test knowledge score with attitude score among school teachers in the experimental group

N = 30			
Variables	Mean	S.D	'r' Value
Knowledge	20.03	2.18	r = 0.766
Attitude	60.26	5.36	p =0.01, S**

**p<0.01, S – Significant

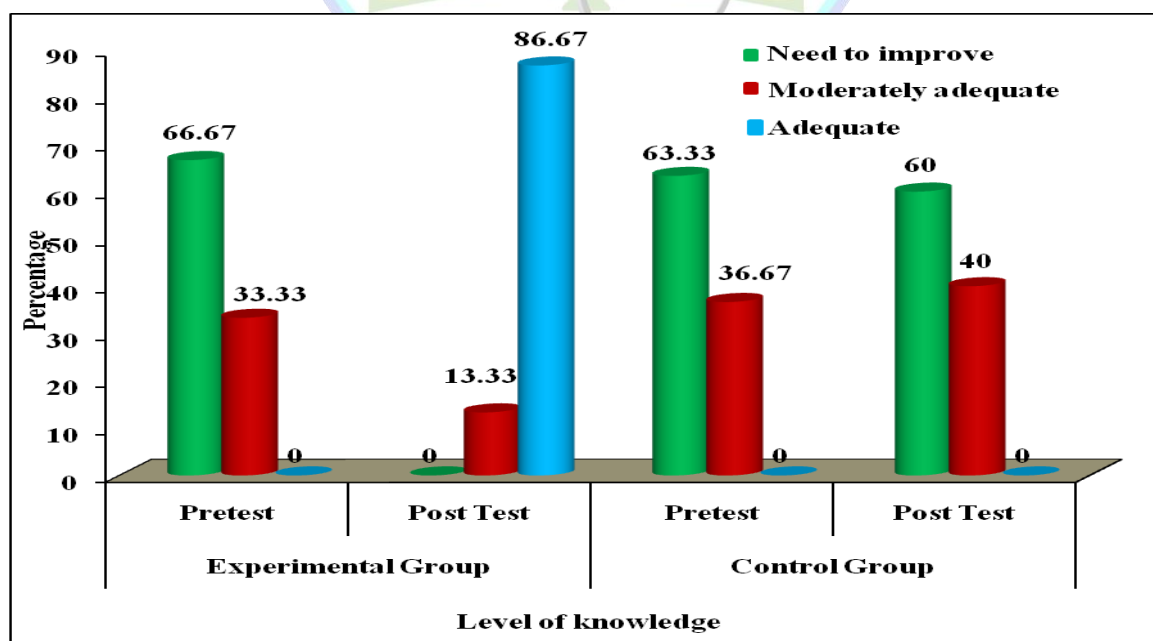


Figure 1: level of knowledge regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers

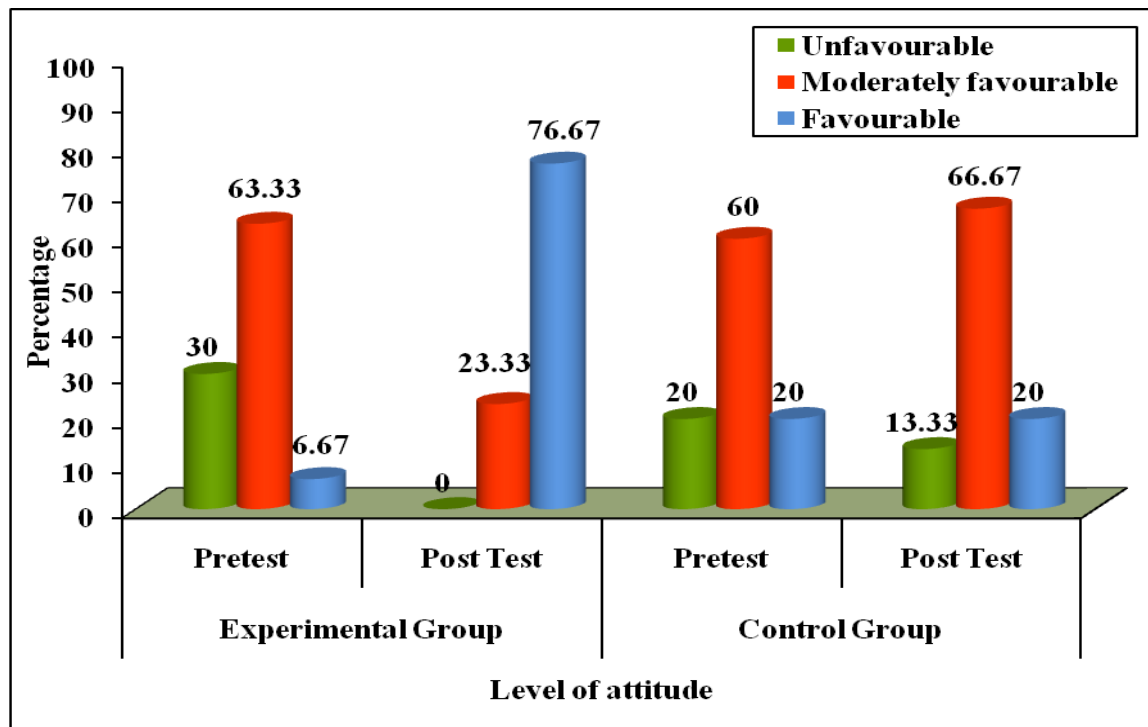


Figure 2: level of attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers

Discussion

This clearly indicates that the training package has imparted adequate knowledge and developed a favorable attitude towards conduct disordering children among school teachers. This change in knowledge and attitude will help school teachers identify the behavioural problems of children at the earliest.

This finding was consistent with the study conducted by O'Leary-Barrett M et.al, 2013^[8] who reported that two 90 minute interventions led by trained teachers significantly reduce the risk of severe conduct disorder symptoms by 21% and Craig, Bell and Leschied, 2011^[9] who reported that it is very important to provide teachers with training regarding anti-violence strategies.

The study findings also revealed that there was a high positive correlation between the knowledge and attitude among school teachers in the experimental group. This finding was consistent with the study conducted by Craig, Bell and Leschied, 2011^[9] who stated that there was a significant positive correlation between experience and witnessing bullying. Hence, the more experiences in witnessing bullying, the more concern and confidence the teachers developed in identifying and managing the problem.

The present study showed that school teachers with many years of teaching experience ($F=4.568$, $p=0.011$) had statistically significant association with the pre test knowledge mean score. Marital status ($F=5.079$, $p=0.032$) had a statistically significant association with the post test attitude mean score.

The current study is limited because the researchers had difficulty in seeking permission from the school administrators. The researcher recommends that school teachers be made aware of identifying conduct disorder to prevent the further consequences of behavioral problems among children.

Conclusion

Conduct disorder is a disruptive behavioral disorder which cannot be cured once diagnosed. It results in serious negative consequences. Such behaviors often result in the child's eventual placement out of the home, either in special education or in the juvenile justice system. Thus, school teachers play a magnified role in preventing conduct disorder in its earliest stage and seeking help from mental health professionals. The findings indicated that the training package was an effective intervention to improve the level of knowledge and attitude regarding conduct disorder in children among school teachers.

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Contributors

KS: Conceptualization of the study, collection, analysis of the data, writing the manuscript, finalized the manuscript and will act as the guarantor of the paper; **JP:** Conceptualization of the study, analysis of the data, writing the manuscript, finalized the manuscript, edited and critically evaluated the manuscript; **HS, KS, CD:** Edited and critically evaluated the manuscript.

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