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Effectiveness of a Structured Teaching Programme on Knowledge Regarding Identification of Common Mental Health Problems in Children Among Primary Schools Teachers in Selected Schools, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh: A Pre-Experimental Study

Richa Sharma[1], Sushma Kumari[2], Shilpa Dagur[3], J. Rajeshwari[4]

[1]M.Sc. Nursing Final Year Student, Medical Surgical Nursing, Santosh College of Nursing, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
[2,3]Assistant Professor, Santosh College of Nursing, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
[4]Principal cum Professor, Santosh College of Nursing, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract

Background: Children's mental health significantly influences learning outcomes, emotional regulation, and social adjustment. Since primary school teachers interact with children daily, they are strategically positioned to notice early behavioral and emotional changes. However, limited awareness and training often restrict their ability to identify mental health concerns promptly.

Methods: A pre-experimental, one-group pre-test–post-test design was adopted. Sixty primary school teachers from selected schools in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, were recruited using convenience sampling. Participants completed a structured knowledge questionnaire consisting of 30 multiple-choice items before and after implementation of a structured teaching programme (STP). The intervention included lectures, discussions, and audio-visual aids. Post-testing was conducted on the seventh day following the programme. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics along with paired t-test and chi-square test.

Results: Before the intervention, 68.33% of teachers demonstrated inadequate knowledge, whereas only 6.67% showed adequate understanding. After the structured teaching programme, inadequate knowledge reduced to 8.33%, and adequate knowledge increased to 45%. The mean knowledge score improved from 10.70 in the pre-test to 17.67 in the post-test, with a statistically significant paired t-value of 10.45 ($p < 0.001$). Educational qualification ($p = 0.000$) and previous experience in identifying mental health issues ($p = 0.018$) showed significant association with post-test knowledge levels.

Conclusion: The structured teaching programme proved highly effective in enhancing teachers' knowledge regarding identification of common mental health problems in children. Integrating mental health education into teacher training curricula may support early detection and timely intervention for affected students.

Keywords: Structured teaching programme, child mental health, primary school teachers, knowledge assessment, pre-test post-test design, early identification.

Introduction

Mental health challenges among children are increasingly recognized as a major public health concern. These conditions can adversely affect academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and overall development. Disorders such as anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct problems, learning disabilities, and autism spectrum conditions commonly emerge during childhood.

Primary school teachers play a crucial role in observing children's daily behavior and academic performance. Their close interaction places them in an advantageous position to recognize early warning signs of psychological distress. Despite this, many teachers report insufficient knowledge, limited confidence, and lack of formal training in child mental health, which hampers timely identification and referral.

In India, both mild and severe forms of developmental and mental health problems among children remain under-recognized. Strengthening teachers' competencies through structured educational interventions could bridge this gap. Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured teaching programme on improving primary school teachers' knowledge regarding identification of common mental health problems in children.

Methodology

Research Approach and Design: An experimental approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design was utilized.

Setting and Sample: The study was conducted in three selected primary schools in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. A total of 60 primary school teachers were enrolled using convenience sampling.

Data Collection Tool: Knowledge was assessed using a structured questionnaire comprising 30 multiple-choice questions related to common childhood mental health problems and their identification.

Intervention: Participants received a structured teaching programme delivered through lectures, interactive discussions, and audio-visual materials. The post-test assessment was carried out on the seventh day following the intervention.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to summarize findings. Inferential statistics included paired t-test to measure effectiveness of the intervention and chi-square test to examine associations between knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

Results

Post-intervention findings indicated substantial improvement in teachers' knowledge. Adequate knowledge increased from 6.67% in the pre-test to 45% in the post-test, while inadequate knowledge decreased from 68.33% to 8.33%.

The mean knowledge score rose from 10.70 (SD ±5.74) before the programme to 17.67 (SD ±6.67) afterward. The calculated paired t-value of 10.45 ($p < 0.001$) confirmed a statistically significant gain in knowledge following the structured teaching programme.

Chi-square analysis revealed significant associations between post-test knowledge levels and educational qualification as well as prior experience in identifying mental health problems among students. No

significant associations were observed with age, gender, years of teaching experience, or nature of employment.

Discussion

The study demonstrated that most teachers initially possessed limited understanding of childhood mental health issues. After exposure to the structured teaching programme, a marked improvement was observed across all knowledge categories. These findings highlight the effectiveness of targeted educational interventions in strengthening teachers' awareness and diagnostic sensitivity.

The significant association with educational qualification suggests that formal academic background contributes to better learning outcomes. Likewise, teachers who had previously encountered mental health concerns among students showed higher post-test scores, emphasizing the role of experiential learning.

Overall, the results support incorporation of structured mental health education into regular teacher training and professional development programmes.

Conclusion

This study confirms that a structured teaching programme can significantly enhance primary school teachers' knowledge regarding identification of common mental health problems in children. Improved awareness among teachers may facilitate early recognition, appropriate referral, and timely support for affected students. Integrating mental health modules into teacher education and continuous training initiatives is strongly recommended to promote children's psychological well-being and academic success.

Limitations

- The study was confined to a limited geographical area, reducing generalizability.
- Sample size was relatively small (n = 60).
- Absence of a control group limits causal inference.
- Only knowledge was assessed; attitude and practice were not evaluated.
- Long-term retention of knowledge was not measured.
- Self-reported responses may introduce bias.

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