



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON EFFECTS OF PLANNED EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

Abuse is a stressor that has a negative interference in the growth and development and health of children. Assessing the knowledge factor and prevalence of child sexual abuse (CSA) is a challenge faced in the society like ours. *About one in seven girls and one in 25 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18. six to 11-year-old children are most likely (23%) to be abused in multiple-victim circumstances who are in the school age period of their growth and development.* CSA is measured as a gigantic public health problem it demands a massive societal response. Hence the investigators were interested to assess the planned education programme (PEP) regarding CSA on knowledge of 60 school children from Mumbai in 2016. 20 modified children's knowledge abuse questionnaire (CKAQ) was administered to assess the knowledge. And 2 questions on if had an experience as a victim and who was the victimizer was also administered to find the prevalence of any. The findings of the study indicates that there was a significant gain in the post test knowledge score 15.75 ± 3.03 when compared to the pre test knowledge score 11.74 ± 4.69 ($p < 0.05$). Children also found to have pre existing knowledge on CSA through their mothers but planned education program has significantly amplified the confidence, awareness as well as the knowledge of children. Children will play a unique role in bringing changes in our country.

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INTRODUCTION

"Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future. Those who abuse them tear at the fabric of our society and weaken our nation" (<https://www.jimhopper.com/abstracts>). - *National Men's March, 1997*. Childhood memories are the sweetest of all. They can be savoured for a lifetime. John Kennedy, 35th US president had quoted it rightly, "Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future. The values and disciplines learned as a child are responsible for the kind of adulthood one has. Thus childhood is special and should be celebrated. Children have the right to enjoy their childhood without any boundaries and to be an educated adult in the future with a wonderful experience of being nurtured as a child" (http://www.indiaparenting.com/occasions/344_2792/significance-of-childrens-day.html).

There are two types of childhood experiences

- Positive experiences that build strong character and a sense of self-worth and that model a nurturing parenting style.
- Negative experiences that engulf children in parenting models of abuse, neglect, exploitation and victimization (<http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org/nurturingparent.php0>).

Imagine a society afflicted by a scourge which struck down a quarter of its daughters and up to one in eight of its sons. Imagine also that this plague, while not immediately fatal, lurked in the bodies and minds of these young children for decades. What would the society's response be? The scourge that we are speaking of is 'child sexual abuse'. It has accounted for probably more misery and suffering than any of the great plagues of history (<https://books.google.co.in/books>). Sexual abuse includes a range of behaviours, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration, fondling, exhibitionism, prostitution, and photographing a child for pornography. The sexual activity does not necessarily involve force. Children are often bribed or verbally coerced into sexual acts (www.icasa.org/docs/childsexualabuse_draft7.doc).

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The effects of child sexual abuse can be devastating. Victims may feel significant distress and display a wide range of psychological symptoms, both short- and long-term. They may feel powerless, ashamed and distrustful of others. The abuse may disrupt victim’s development and increase the likelihood that they will experience other sexual assaults in the future (Howard, 2000). School-age children continue to explore their own bodies. Children begin to seek information about sex and look for books and diagrams that explain their own organs and functions. Curiosity about sexuality takes the form of playing games such as, “I’ll show you mine if you show me yours”. Some boys of this age compare penis size. Children become interested in sex words and dirty jokes. Limited interest in the opposite sex may be evident. Interest in the child’s own and other bodies continues, particularly if changes in their bodies begin to occur. Feelings of needing privacy emerge. School age children may imitate sexual behaviours they have seen or heard about (<http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/sexualdevelopmentandbehavior.pdf><http://thinkexist.com/quotations/children-are-like-wet-cement-whatever-falls-on/365710.html>). In the recent years our motherland witnessed bloodshed and mourning of many tiny tots which could be out of the innocence of the young souls or the ignorance of many. “We believe *children are like wet cement, whatever falls on them makes an impression* (https://www.bravehearts.org.au/files/Facts%20and%20Stats_updated141212.pdf)” *about 1 in 7 girls and 1 in 25 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18. Six to 11-year old children (23%) are most likely to be abused in multiple-victim circumstances that are in the school age period of their growth and development* (Hornby, 2009). Child sexual abuse is measured as a gigantic public health problem it demands a massive societal response. We, both as faculty and budding nursing professionals undertook this study to assess and bring awareness and confidence in the school age children of our surrounding.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is a Quasi experimental study (one group pre-test post-test design) based on the questionnaire developed by the faculty and students. It was a specially designed self administered demographic profile with 20 questions in relation to knowledge on child sexual abuse by modified children’s knowledge abuse questionnaire (Table: 1) and 2 questions on prevalence of sexual abuse (Table: 2). 60 boys and girls in the age group of 10 to 13 belong to a high school in Mumbai participated in this study. Necessary clearance from school authority was obtained. Students were briefed about the background and the purpose of the study and consent was obtained after assuring about the confidentiality. The questionnaire was distributed and the students were asked to indicate their responses either as Yes/No. They were instructed to give their own answers (pre-test) and consultation was not permitted. After which the answer sheets were collected for evaluation. Education on CSA was given and post test knowledge was assessed with the same questionnaire. Variables were expressed in frequency and percentage. Student paired ‘t’ test was used to compare the knowledge score. Significance of these variables in knowledge on CSA was analysed with Chi-square test. A p value of <0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

The results are presented into 3 sections. The first section focused on the baseline variables of 60 children. Out of the 60 children, 34% of the children are males and all are in the age group of 11 to 12 years where 58.33% of children live in a joint family. Majority (80%) of them received information on CSA from the family and 20% through media. About 50% of fathers and 61% of mothers have undergone schooling and 23.33% of fathers even educated up to graduation.

Table 1. Mean, SD and paired’ test of knowledge score (pre and post test)

Sl. No	Pre test knowledge Score		Post test knowledge Score		Student Paired ‘t’ test	P- value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	11.74	4.69	15.75	3.03	5.64	2.26*



Fig. 1. Prevalence of abuse as a victim by various kinds

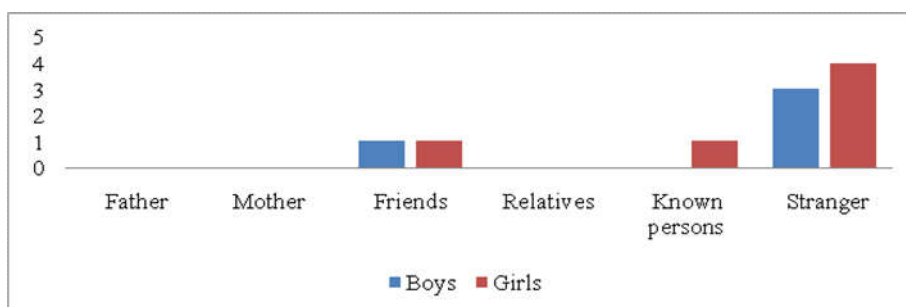


Fig. 2. Prevalence of abuse – Victimizer

The section 2 reveals the Prevalence of sexual abuse. In case of being victim of any of these following aspects (Fig 1), and who is the victim (Fig 2). Girls seems to experience of being exposed to pornography, asked sexually disturbing questions, being held in a sexual manner, forced to touch another person's genital region and been pressed the other persons private area on self. Both boys and girls have said the victimizer is friends and strangers. Girls also experience from the known persons. The section 3 focussed on comparing the effectiveness of planned education programme in both pre test and post test scores through modified Children's Knowledge Abuse Questionnaire. The data in Table 1 shows that the mean knowledge score of students was significantly increased from 11.74 and SD is 4.69 to 15.75 and SD is 3.03 out of 20 at 2.26 ($p=0.05$) level of significance. Thus the research hypothesis is accepted that there is a significant gain in the knowledge level of students. This supports the fact that the planned education programme on CSA was effective. The section 4 focussed on the association between knowledge and variables. It represents that there is a significant association between the gender of school children, and educational status of mother with knowledge score at 5.99 and 9.49 ($p=0.05$) respectively. There is no significant association between knowledge scores and other selected baseline variables.

DISCUSSION

Child sexual abuse is not solely restricted to physical contact: such abuse could include non contact abuse, such as exposure, voyeurism, and child pornography (<https://victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/child-sexual-abuse-statistics>). The present study involved children ($N=60$) belonging to the age group 10-13 years. Various similar studies (Lalor, 2004; Browne, 1986) were done on children of the same age group with minor variations in lower and upper limit. For instance, a literature review reveals that younger children are more likely to be victim of intra familial abuse (72%) while school aged children are more likely to experience extra familial abuse (73%). The present study also concludes that the sex does play an important role in knowledge of children.

The survey, sponsored by WCD ministry and carried out by the NGO Prayas in association with UNICEF and Save the Children, found that over 50% children were subjected to one or the other form of physical abuse and more boys than girls were abused physically (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Over-53-children-face-sexual-abuse-Survey/articleshow/1881344.cms>). With regard to the sex distribution in the present study there was male predominance (34%). A similar experience was seen as that of the previous review in both the sex though the exposure or the kinds of exposure is less serious. Given the fact, it was considered though the prevalence seems to be an unintentional approach and were not in the awareness of the children as an serious impact, looking at the future outcome in the students in terms of behavioural, emotional and family life educated the students on the special aspect of prevention as saying 'NO' and reporting.

A research done showed that children who received sexual abuse prevention training from both their teacher and parents showed greater gain in knowledge or having the prevention skill measures (Pelcovitz *et al.*, 1992). In the present study, significant number of children showed having very good knowledge from the mother (61%) who is educated.

The child becomes more comfortable with the mother who is educated or who is interested in the Childs wellbeing hence she or he can disclose and clarify their personal doubts. Utilizing parents as trainers may promote ongoing prevention efforts. A systematic study was conducted on 5802 students of primary and secondary school by Walshk, Zwi K and Woolfenden S. to assess the effectiveness of school based education programme for prevention of child sexual abuse. It was found to be effective in increasing participant's skill in protecting behaviour and knowledge among children exposed to such programmes (<http://www.uwlax.edu>). In the present study, the result showed that the mean post-test knowledge score was 15.75 and SD is 3.03. The difference between the pre-test and post test knowledge scores are statistically significant at 2.26 ($p=0.05$) level of significance. This supports the fact that that there is a significant gain in the knowledge level of students and the planned education programme on CSA was effective. This study also indicates that the prevention programs should personalize the information taught, so that children are better able to understand that sexual abuse may happen to them. Furthermore, programs should promote generalization by incorporating role plays with a variety of sexual abuse lures, responses, situations, and potential perpetrators, so that the skills taught may prove useful to the children at some point in time.

The PEP covered mainly Key Prevention Concepts on CSA besides, how to avoid child sexual abuse, Skills to repel child sexual abuse and Reporting child sexual abuse:

- Body ownership
- Good touch versus "bad" touch
- Private parts
- Difference between a surprise and a secret
- Who is a stranger
- Tricks
- Permission to tell
- Familiar people, including relatives and family members, may touch children in inappropriate ways
- If you are sexually abused, it's not your fault.
- Boys are at risk of sexual abuse (<http://www.dunbrook.org/stats.html>)

This study concludes that children are like wet cement; whatever falls on them makes an impression. School age children may imitate sexual behaviours they have seen or heard about. The younger children need more repetition when learning child sexual abuse information. We recommend that a focus on concrete skills and concepts through role plays, film and modelling is required to give education to both younger and older children to comprehend abstract information.

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