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Assessment of Teachers' Knowledge about Child abuse at AL Nasiriya Primary Schools

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Abstract

Background: One of the most pressing issues concerning child health and well-being is child abuse; it remains to be particular and major risk to the emotional and social well-being of the children worldwide. As pupils spend long time in school, the teachers must be qualified to identify physical and behavioral fluctuations related to abuse to assuredly determine the reason and design interventions properly. The insufficient data and information result in a break in the vital duty of teachers in determination and initial assistance in case of child abuse.

Objectives: The aims of the study were to evaluate the information of the primary school teachers on identifying and reporting of child abuse and to identify any link between the teachers' knowledge with designated sociodemographic variables.

Methodology: A descriptive design was applied during the study, which include 100 primary school teachers from 6 selected schools in Al-Nasiriyah city. The tool used for data collection were a designed questionnaire on signs and symptoms of child abuse.

Results: Most of the school teachers (74%) had low knowledge on child abuse. Regarding association between knowledge and certain sociodemographic variables, no significant statistical association found except for Receive educational training courses in child abuse ($p < .05$).

Conclusion: Child abuse is an international concern, children experience abuse in several types, and additional awareness will assist in fighting this issues. Teachers' knowledge have to be improved by applying attentiveness programs on child abuse.

Keywords: *Assessment, knowledge, child abuse, primary school teachers.*

Introduction

Children all over the world must have the simple and basic human right to live safely, child abuse risk that right by engaging the child at danger of emotional and physical injuries and may be death. Child abuse and happen in all various groups all around the world despite ethnic, occupational, cultural, and socioeconomic differences⁽¹⁾.

Child maltreatment (child abuse) is generally defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the abuse and neglect of people under 18 years of age. It includes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or

other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power"⁽²⁾.

During 2016, around 4.1 million reports concerning 7.4 million child were reported to U.S. child protective service agencies⁽³⁾. Majority of these reports (65%) were by specialists who, while working, encountered the suspected child victim. With educational staffs, one of the major reporters of child abuse. In United States of America, educators introduce 16% of all reports⁽⁴⁾.

Teachers are in direct contact on day-to-day basis with a large number of children for a longtime as the

child devotes a lengthier period in school. Therefore, teachers can detect behavioral abnormalities in the child and consequently are in a good place to perceive and report child abuse, but are not prepared or are not sufficiently informed⁽⁵⁾. Teachers' attitudes can effect the awareness and perception of abuse and subsequently reporting cases⁽⁶⁾.

The teachers knowledge toward reporting of child abuse is a chief factor in dealing with the case. There are numerous components that may possibly be impacted by their attitude and recognition that may influence the quality of reporting and decision-creation of child abuse that teachers have to put in consideration⁽⁷⁾.

Some of the recognized impacts affecting active teacher reporting child abuse emerge from the attributes of the child's condition, for example, the recurrence and seriousness of the child's behaviour and injuries⁽⁸⁾. Others identify with institutional elements, for example, a steady workplace. Still, many determinants related to the teacher, such as the teacher's consciousness of the presence of a lawful obligation to report alleged child abuse, their insight of the content of that obligation⁽⁹⁾ and their disposition concerning the duty⁽¹⁰⁾.

It is vital for teachers to own positive mentalities concerning the reporting obligation, knowledge regarding communal and educational background of child abuse, and 'lawful literacy' about the lawful and policy-based commitments to report. This professional advancement of teachers should happen not just in in-service settings, but also in pre-service ones^(11, 12).

The deficiency of researches (especially in Iraq) in teachers' knowledge and training in the subject of child abuse is alarming. Therefore, this study aims to assess teachers' knowledge concerning child abuse and set basis for future studies and solutions to this problem in Iraq.

Material and Method

Study Design: Descriptive survey is conducted in the period from 19th of April 2019 to 1st of October 2019.

Setting of the Study: The study was applied at 10 primary schools in Al-Nasiriyah city, Thi-qar, Iraq.

Study Sample: A probability (random) sample of (100) teachers, who were working in 10 primary schools in Al-Nasiriyah city.

The Study Instrument: The authors constructed a questionnaire for the purpose of the study

Part 1: Demographic Data: Socio-demographic data sheet composed of six points that included (Marital status, gender, education, passing of educational training courses, income).

Part 2: Part II. Clinical information regarding blood transfusion and its reactions: The questionnaire is consisted of (12) items separated into three domains.

First Domain: (4) items connected to signs and symptoms of physical violence.

Second domain: (4) items related to signs and symptoms of emotional violence.

Third domain: (6) items linked to signs and symptoms of sexual violence.

These items were rated according to the following scale; ["know" is given (1); "Don't know" is given (2)]

Data Collection: Data were gathered by application of the constructed questionnaire after estimation of the reliability and validity through direct interview with the sample.

Pilot Study: In order to estimate the study instrument (questionnaire) reliability, A (10) teachers sample were designated; pilot study was applied in the period from 1st of April to 15th of April 2019. The pilot study sample was excepted from the total study sample.

Validity: Study instruments validity were determined by a group of (7) experts, that had more than five years of experience in the study field.

Reliability: Questionnaire reliability was estimated by the use of test re-test method on ten teachers. Outcomes displayed acceptable level of constancy and internal consistency of major items regarding responses' of the questionnaire, responses were calculated through applying the Alpha Cronbach parameter, which exhibit that the person correlation coefficient = (0.78).

Analysis of the Statistics: With the intention of analyze the study data, the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) ver. (23) were used (Percentage, Frequency, Mean, Standard deviation, Mean of score, and Chi-square).

Results

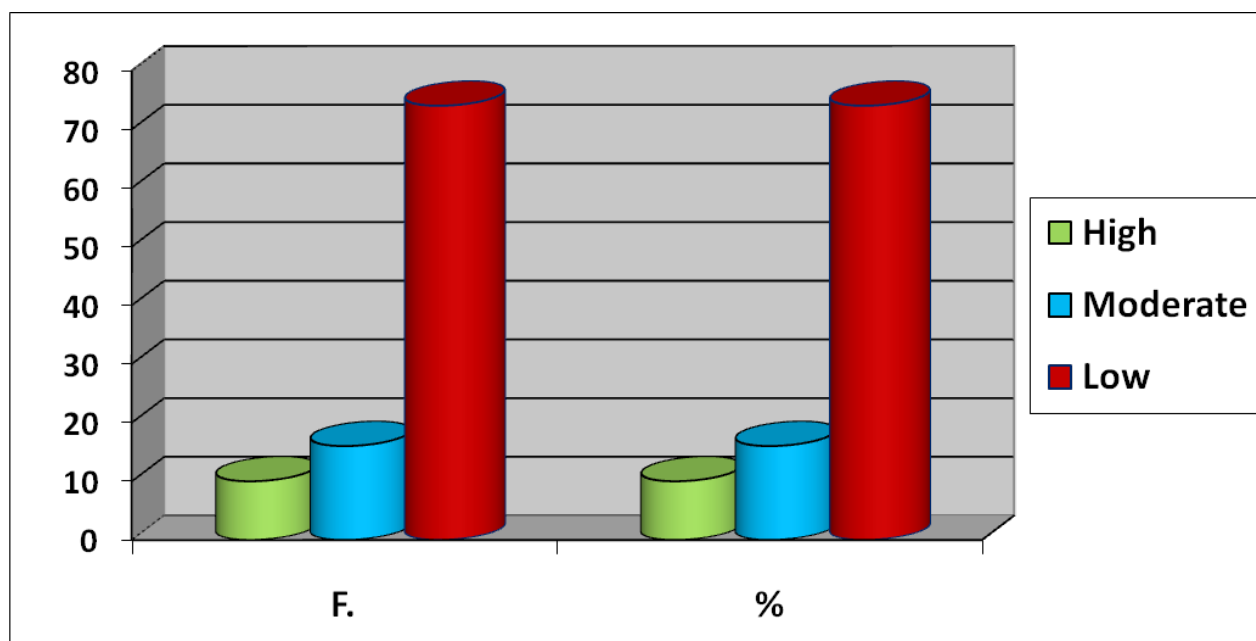
Table 1: Frequency of Sociodemographic characteristics of Teachers (N=100)

SDVs	Group	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Marital Status	Single	33	29
	Married	57	61
	Divorced	6	6
	Widowed	4	4
Gender	Male	39	39
	Female	61	61
Education	Diploma or Associated Degree	78	78
	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	22	22
Receive educational training courses in child abuse	Yes	5	5
	No	95	95

SDVs = Sociodemographic variables, % = percentage, F = frequency, n = number of samples

Table (1) shows that the most of the study subjects were married (57%) Female (61%). The highest educational status of the participants was reported to

be (78%) of diploma or Associated Degree. Majority of the study subjects (95%). Have not Receive educational training courses in child abuse.



n = number of samples, F = frequency, % = percentage

Figure (1): Total teacher’s knowledge concerning child abuse

Figure (1) shows knowledge levels of teachers where most of them (74%) were have low level and (16%) were have moderate level, while only (10) were

have a high knowledge level regarding blood transfusion reactions.

Table (3): Relationship between SDVs and nurses knowledge regarding main domains

Main Domains \ SDVs	Marital status		Gender		Education		Receive educational training courses in child maltreatment	
	X ²	Sig.	X ²	Sig.	X ²	Sig.	X ²	Sig.
Signs and symptoms of physical violence	19.177	.574	3.278	.858	20.261	.122	26.359	.023
Signs and symptoms of emotional violence	27.747	.271	19.704	.012	23.658	.097	36.634	.002
Signs and symptoms of sexual violence	30.908	.275	14.074	.120	17.212	.509	34.428	.011
Total	64.694	.796	23.291	.561	60.847	.140	71.069	.027

SDVs: Sociodemographic variables, X²: Chi-square, Sig.: Significance.

Table (3) illustrates the relationship between SDVs and knowledge level concerning main domains and total level of knowledge.

Discussion

The issue of child abuse has substantial insinuations for pre-service teacher’s preparation and proficient development. They have an instructive role in interacting with suspected children, and a lawful and professional obligation to report alleged case. Teachers need provision and training to improve the particular knowledge and confidence wanted to interact with this multifaceted context.

The results of the current study presented that most of the sample were married (57%) Females (61%) and the highest educational status of the participants was reported to be (78%) of diploma or Associated Degree.

The most important finding concerning sociodemographic variables is that (95%) of the study sample have not receive educational training courses in child abuse (either pre- or in-service) and that is an extremely alarming result that indicate poor administrations performance in providing knowledge and training programs for teachers. Many studies find low or no content at all concerning child protection in teachers training programs during pre-service period^(12, 13). Also, some studies suggest that reporting of the teachers is affected by the level and context of teachers’ training programs in identifying abuse⁽¹⁴⁾.

Concerning total knowledge of the teachers regarding child abuse, the study exhibits that majority (74%) have low levels of knowledge. From the researchers’ viewpoint, that was expected because in Iraq (like in many of the developing countries) the

governmental administrations have a “bigger” problems to deal with until child abuse has become an unimportant issue compared to other problems!

The results also illustrated that there was statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) related to knowledge score with sociodemographic data (Receiving educational training courses in child abuse in specific). The relationship between these two items is undeniable as many studies shows ^(7, 14).

Conclusion

Child abuse is an international concern that need urgent and effective interventions in order to manage appropriately. In developing countries including Iraq, this problem takes a less attention from the specialized administrations and organizations that subsequently result in unnoticed escalation that primarily affect the children.

Financial Disclosure: There is no financial disclosure.

Conflict of Interest: None to declare.

Ethical Clearance: All experimental protocols were approved under the College of Nursing, University of Thi_Qar, Iraq and all experiments were carried out in accordance with approved guidelines.

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