Original Research Paper

Mental Health Nursing

EFFECTIVENESS OF AN AWARENESS PROGRAM ON KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AMONG HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS: A STUDY PROTOCOL

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ABSTRACT **Background:** Mental health issues among adolescents are a growing concern worldwide, with significant implication for their overall well-being and academic performance. Teachers play a vital role in identifying and supporting students who may be struggling, lack the necessary knowledge and skills to recognize and address these issues effectively. The ideal scenario is where the members of the community are aware and can deliver mental health first aid (MHFA). **Objective:** To evaluate effectiveness of an awareness program on knowledge regarding mental health first aid among high school teachers. **Study Design:** Quantitative approach with one group pretest-posttest, pre experimental research design. **Methodology:** Through simple random sampling, 80 high school teachers will be selected. Their knowledge will be assessed through pre-test with the help of self-structured knowledge questionnaire. Validity and reliability of the tool and intervention program will be assessed through proper statistical measures and pilot study. This study will be conducted in selected high schools of Nagpur, Maharashtra, India. The duration will be one month. Awareness program on Mental health first aid will be administered. Post-test will be conducted after seven days. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, collected data will be analyzed. **Expected Results:** Expected improvement in the knowledge score will be about 20 to 25 % after administration of an awareness program regarding mental health first aid. **Limitation:** Study will be conducted in selected high schools of Nagpur district only. **Conclusion:** This study findings will be contribute to the existing body of knowledge on mental health literacy among teachers and shed light on the effectiveness of an awareness programs in improving knowledge of mental health first aid and empower them to deliver effective MHFA to people with mental issues.

KEYWORDS : Mental health first aid (MHFA), High school teachers, Knowledge, awareness program.

INTRODUCTION:

In India, about 14% of all adults have or will have a mental condition of some kind as per the National Mental Health Survey 2019. Nearly 38 million people in the country suffering from anxiety disorders & 56 million are thought to suffer from depression. Between 2012 and 2030, economic cost of poor mental health in the country will be over $1.03 trillion as per the WHO report. And after pandemic, it has further added.[1] Mental health first aid (MHFA) teaches people how to provide help to those in mental health crisis situations or with developing mental disorders. MHFA helps people feel confident to support others in seeking help for mental health issues and will improve the quality of MHFA. Mental health first aid (MHFA) is just like a physical first aid i.e. help given to an injured person before professional medical treatment can be obtained, It is the help provided to a person with mental health issues or mental health crisis until appropriate professional treatment is received or the crisis is resolved.[2] It's important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of mental illness and to take action to ensure people experiencing mental health problems receive the assistance and treatment they need.[3]

The most recent version of the MHFA Action Plan is ALGEE, i.e. a) Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis, b)Listen and communicate non-judgementally, c)Give support and information, d)Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help, e)Encourage other supports.[4] In a cluster randomized trial regarding Mental health first aid training for high school teachers, Anthony F Jorm, Betty A Kitchener (2010) stated that mental disorders often have their first onset during youth. For that reason, teachers are in a good position to provide early assistance to students who are developing mental health problems. Teachers' knowledge increased after MHFA training, misconceptions & beliefs changed about treatment to be more like those of mental health professionals, some aspects of stigma were reduced, and their confidence in providing help to students and colleagues was increased. Authors concluded that Mental Health First Aid training has

positive effects on teachers' mental health knowledge, attitudes, confidence and some aspects of their behaviour.[5]

In a cross-sectional survey among 358 community pharmacist authors stated that seven participants (2%) screened positive for depression using PHQ-2. One hundred eight participants (30.4%) reported a previous desire to speak to someone about mental illness; of these, only 41 (38.7%) and 63 patients (59.4%) reported speaking to a physician or therapist, respectively. Only 53 participants (15.4%) reported awareness of MHFA.[6]

Teachers have both a close and possibly inestimable long term overview on changes in academic performances and social interactions of students. These could be indicators of emerging anxiety, depression or other treatable mental disorders. Therefore teachers have a distinctive and tactical opportunity to detect observable behavioral changes in students that could be the first presenting signs of mental problems. They also have an necessary knowledge, education and skills that can be the base for recognizing mental illness and responding to youth with stressor or behavioral problem, that is adversely impacting their functioning and optimal development at school.[7]

The findings from the study reveals that there is a significant gap in the ability of teachers to recognize mental health issues, specifically depression. Even after reorganization of mental health problem, the teachers' tendency to direct such students to professional help is not sufficient. The findings also showed that teachers who are able to identify symptoms of depression are more proficient to guide students with mental health problems to seek professional help, while others who could not identify depression were likely to suggest self help strategies. Mental health awareness programs will help teachers for early identification of mental health issues in students and help them to get appropriate professional help at the earliest. Awareness program is an utmost need, especially in a country like India where the treatment gap for depression is 80%.[8] Teachers have a distinctive and practical

opportunity to detect behavioral changes in students that may help for early identification of mental disorders, which can be treated as early as possible.

OBJECTIVES:
1. To assess the knowledge regarding mental health first aid among high school teachers.
2. To evaluate effectiveness of an awareness program on knowledge regarding mental health first aid among high school teachers.
3. To associate study finding with selected demographic variables.

Hypothesis:
H_0 - There is no significant difference between pretest & posttest knowledge scores of awareness program regarding Mental Health First Aid among high school teachers.

H_1- There is significant difference between pretest & posttest knowledge scores of awareness program regarding Mental Health First Aid among high school teachers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:
Study Design: Pre-Experimental, one group pre test -post test design.

Study Setting: Selected High schools of Nagpur district.

Participants: High Schools Teachers

Sample Size Calculation:

$$N = \frac{\left(Z_{(\alpha/2)} + Z_\beta\right)^2 (P_1(1 - P_1) + (P_2(1 - P_2)\,)}{(P2 - P1)^2}$$

$$Z_{\alpha/2} = \text{at } 95\,\% \ (CI) = 1.96$$

- Depicts the desired level of statistical significance
- Zß =1.28 : Depicts the desired power =
- 1.28 for 90 % N =Minimum samples required for each group
- Proportion of Knowledge P1 (Before) = 58% =0.58 (As per reference article)[9]
- Proportion of Improved Knowledge P2 (After)=78% =0.78 (Expected)
- Considering 20% Clinically relevant margin of difference, Minimum sample size required
- N = (1.96 + 1.28) ^ 2 *((0.58) (1-0.58) +0.78(1-0.78)/(0.20) ^ 2
- Sample Size (N) = 66.
- (20 % Drop out) Sample size N=79. Total sample size =80

Sampling Technique: Simple random sampling

Inclusion Criteria: High school teachers who will give consent to participate in study.

Exclusion Criteria: High School teachers who had undergone training regarding Mental Health First Aid.

Data Collection Tool:
Section A: It includes demographic variables. Age, sex, education, marital status, year of experience and previous training attended.

Section B: It includes self-structured questionnaire on knowledge regarding mental health issues and mental health first aid (MHFA).

Knowledge Assessment: High school eachers' knowledge will be assessed by pre and post-test using self-structured multiple-choice questions. Validity and reliability of tool and awareness program will be assessed by appropriate statistical measures. Validity over the questionnaire will be established for build up through both the construct & content manner to seek for the results what has intended purposely for the inferences & conclusion to measure. Knowledge assessment will consider poor if the score is < 33 %, Average if it is 33.01 to 66 %, and Good if it is > 66.01%.

Description of Intervention: The intervention is an awareness program designed to improve the knowledge of high school teachers regarding mental health first aid. Mental health first aid is the initial support and assistance provided to individuals experiencing mental health challenges or crises until professional help can be obtained. The program aims to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify signs of mental health issues among students and provide appropriate support. The program makes use of realistic scenarios and power point presentation, charts, flashcards. The awareness program involves interactive lectures. The lectures cover the concepts of mental health, various mental health disorders and MHFA including ALGEE action plan. The panel of Experts from psychiatry and mental health nursing will judge the content validity of an awareness program for relevancy and adequacy of content to improve knowledge of high school teachers.

Study Procedure And Data Collection:
The study shall be conducted only after the approval of IEC. Investigators will visit the research area and will obtained the necessary permission from the concerned authorities. High school teachers who fulfil inclusion criteria shall be assigned to the study. Written informed consent shall be taken from the participants. Each participant will receive a code number and self-administered questionnaires. A self-administered questionnaire will be used to obtain information on the socio-demographics of participants. Thereafter, baseline knowledge will be assessed. Ensuring proper spacing of participants in research studies is a common practice to minimize the potential for copying or sharing information during data collection. This approach helps maintain the integrity and validity of the study results. Thereafter, Investigator will deliver awareness programme on mental health first aid for the participants on the same day. After seven days post-test will be conducted.

Validity over the questionnaire will be established for build up through both the construct & content manner to seek for the results what has intended purposely for the inferences & conclusion to measure. Reliability of the questionnaire will be calculated by using appropriate statistical test.

Data Analysis:
All results will be calculated using SPSS version 26. Overall results for the outcome variables will be listed in tables and graphs for both descriptive (Mean, mean percentage, Standard deviation), & inferential statistics (Paired t - test will be used to find the significance difference between two groups (before & after), Association results will be analyzed using chi square analysis).

EXPECTED RESULTS:
Expected improvement in the knowledge will be about 20 to 25 % after administration of an awareness program regarding mental health first aid. There will be positive or negative correlation between knowledge regarding mental health first aid and selected demographic variables.

DISCUSSION:
Findings of present study will supported by previous studies where training programs have been shown significant increase in teachers' knowledge over baseline in school-based mental health interventions.[9]The present study findings will be consistent with those of other studies, especially regarding the significant increase in knowledge mean scores after the 12-h training.[10,11]

CONCLUSION:

The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on mental health literacy among teachers and shed light on the effectiveness of awareness programs in improving mental health first aid knowledge. Ultimately, the outcomes of this study aim to enhance the capacity of high school teachers to support students experiencing mental health challenges, there by promoting a healthier and more inclusive educational environment.

Consent And Ethical Approval:

The study will be conducted after approval of Institutional Ethics Committee. Written consent will be taken from the participants for participation in the study. High school teachers will be instructed that their participation in this study will be entirely voluntary, and they may opt out at any point of study. Throughout the Study, confidentiality will be maintained. The study's findings will be disseminated to participants and published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Conflict Of Interest: No conflicts of interest declare by the authors.

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