



KNOWLEDGE OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING PREVENTION OF SUICIDE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS AT ERNAKULUM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT Suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents in the age group of 15-25 years and few suicides or suicide attempts are taking place in schools. The incidence of suicide among the youth has been increasing over the years. There is such hopelessness among youngsters who should have so much to look forward to. Once thought to be confined to older people, suicide is now claiming more and more in youngsters. The present study aimed to assess the knowledge of high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents in selected schools in Ernakulam district. The study adopted a non-experimental descriptive design. The study was done in St Joseph GHS, Chengal and St Joseph GHS, Karukutty at Angamaly in Ernakulam district among 60 high school teachers, who met the inclusion criteria. Study samples were selected by purposive sampling technique. The tools of the study were demographic proforma and structured knowledge questionnaire. The data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study showed that 60 % of high school teachers had acquired average knowledge regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents and the mean knowledge score was 13.516. It revealed that there was no significant association with the level of knowledge regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents and selected demographic variables. Finally the study, concluded that the teachers having only average knowledge regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents.

KEYWORDS : Knowledge; Teachers; Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period of human development manifested by rapid bio-psycho-social changes demanding a wide variety of adaptations to these changes. This is a unique stage of development that occurs between ages 11 and 20 years, when a shift in growth and learning occurs. It is also a period during which adolescents are struggling to consolidate their abilities to control their impulses and react to the many crisis that may seem trivial to adults but are very important to teens. During this period, many adolescents experiment with risk taking behaviors such as smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, engaging in unprotected sex, truancy or delinquent behaviors, running away from home, suicide, anxiety and so on.

At present, the suicide rate among adolescents, especially in high school students has been increasing over the years. The rising trend of suicides among adolescent lies in the socio-cultural changes that are taking place in the increasingly globalized and urban India. Studies have shown that teachers are inadequately trained on issues surrounding adolescent suicide and that most schools do not have a training program in place.

The study was carried out to determine the knowledge of high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to assess the knowledge of high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents in selected schools in Ernakulam district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the study are to,

1. assess the level of knowledge among high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide in adolescents.
2. find the association between the pretest level of knowledge score of teachers regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents and selected demographic variables.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Knowledge: The understanding gained through video assisted teaching regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents in terms of knowledge questionnaire.

Teachers: The one who teaches the high school students in selected schools in Ernakulam district.

Suicide: An action undertaken by an adolescent to kill oneself.

Prevention: The measures which diminish the possibilities of the occurrence of suicidal behavior among adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative descriptive approach was adopted for the study. The study was conducted at St Joseph GHS, Chengal and St Joseph GHS Karukutty, Angamaly, Ernakulam. The study population consists of teachers teaching in high school. Sixty high school teachers were selected by non-probability purposive sampling. The data collection tool used for the study was demographic proforma and structured knowledge questionnaire on prevention of suicide among adolescents. The demographic proforma included 9 items such as age, gender, religion, marital status, educational status, years of teaching experience, previous knowledge regarding prevention of suicide, teachers having adolescent age group children and previous experience of handling suicidal cases. Structured knowledge questionnaire included thirty multiple choice questions to assess the knowledge of high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents. The knowledge regarding general information on suicide prevention had six items, epidemiology, risk factors of suicide among adolescents, warning signs of suicide, suicide method, and the role of teacher in prevention of suicide and community resources.

Content validity was established by giving it to 7 experts in the field of nursing against structured criteria, 6 items which are not relevant were deleted from knowledge. The reliability of the Structured Knowledge Questionnaire was done by split half method which was $r=0.89$, indicating the tool was reliable.

The study was conducted after obtaining the formal permission from the authorities. The purpose of the study was explained and informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality was assured to all the samples. Pretest was conducted to assess the knowledge of high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide among adolescents by using Structured Knowledge Questionnaire.

RESULTS

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the study findings are organized under following sections

Section 1: Description of demographic variables of high school teachers.

Out of 60 teachers, 22 (36.66 %) of high school teachers belonged to the age group of 41-50 years and 96.67% were females. Most of the teachers were Christians. 40 (66.66%) of high school teachers were married and rest of them were single. 41 (68.33%) of high school teachers were with educational qualification B.Ed. 39 (65 %) of the high school teachers had experience of above 10 years. 29 (48.33%) of teachers had previous knowledge regarding prevention of suicide from television. 50 % of high school teachers had adolescent age group children. Out of 60 teachers, 83.33% of high school teachers haven't had previous experience of handling suicidal cases.

Section 2: Distribution of subjects according to the knowledge score

Table 1
Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation on level of knowledge among high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide.

(n= 60)

Knowledge Score	Pre Test			
	f	%	Mean	SD
Poor (1-7)	2	3.33		
Average (8-14)	36	60	13.516	3.00
Good (15-22)	22	36.66		
Very Good (23-30)	-	-		

The data presented in table 1 shows that in the pre-test, out of 60 high school teachers, 36 had average knowledge (60%) and 22 subjects had good knowledge (36.66%). The mean pretest knowledge score of high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide were 13.516.

Section 3: Association of knowledge of high school teachers with selected demographic variables

The chi square test was computed between the pretest knowledge score and demographic variables such as age, gender, religion, marital status, educational status, years of teaching experience, previous knowledge regarding prevention of suicide, teachers having adolescent age group children and previous experience of handling suicidal cases. It shows that there is no association between levels of knowledge of high school teachers with selected demographic variables.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted with the objective of assessing the level of knowledge among high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide in adolescents in selected schools at Ernakulam district.

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of the findings of the study:

- In the pre-test, majority of the high school teachers regarding prevention of suicide had average knowledge.
- It also shows that there is no significant association between levels of knowledge of high school teachers with selected demographic variables.

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