

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the most critical period of child development. Quality ECD is vital for children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional development. Poor ECD is an emerging public health issue, on future welling, learning capacity economic success, and social participation. Satisfactory mothers' knowledge of ECD is proven to be beneficial to prevent most poor ECD. Adequate maternal health literacy (MHL) on ECD may guide optimized mothers' knowledge of ECD.

Objectives

The objective was to describe maternal health literacy, its associated factors, and knowledge on early child hood development among mothers having 18 months old children in the Kurunagala district.

Method

A community-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in 4 randomly selected MOH areas in the Kurunagala district among 422 mothers having 18-month-old children. Mothers who attended immunization clinics were selected by consecutive sampling method. Data were collected using pretested interview administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 21. The mother's knowledge of ECD was categorized as satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Maternal health literacy was categorized as adequate and limited.

Results

A total of 422 mothers participated in the study. The response rate was 100%. An unsatisfactory level of knowledge of ECD was found among 54.5% (95%CI=49.7%-59 %,) of mothers, and limited maternal health on ECD was found among 59 % of mothers (95%CI=53.9-63.7%). Mothers with a maximum level of education below GCE O/L (OR=1.915, 95%CI =1.203-2.836, $p < 0.001$) and those with monthly family income below Rs 30, 000 (OR=2.013, 95%CI =1.322-3.066, $p < 0.001$) had significant associated with limited MHL. Employed status was found as a significant protective factor for limited MHL (OR=0.571, 95%CI =0.0363-0.899, $p=0.01$). Mothers' level of knowledge of ECD was a significantly positive correlation with the level of maternal health literacy on ECD ($r=0.419$, 95% CI =0.321-0.519, $p < 0.01$).

TITLE: Maternal health literacy, its associated factors and knowledge on early childhood development among mothers having 18 months old children in Kurunagala district. Version 1.0

Conclusion

Mothers having 18-month-old children in the Kurunagala district were found to have an unsatisfactory level of Knowledge of ECD and limited maternal health literacy. Lower educational attainment and lower monthly family income were associated with limited MHL. Mothers' level of knowledge had a significant positive correlation with the level of MHL.

Recommendation

Effective health promoting and educational strategies should be formulated to improve mothers' knowledge of ECD and MHL among reproductive-age women.

Keywords

Early childhood development, mothers' knowledge, maternal health literacy, eighteen-month-old children,