

Home Environment of Infants and Mothers Knowledge Regarding Childcare

Abstract

The study aims at finding out the home environment of infants and their mother's knowledge regarding aspects of child care. A total sample of 108 infants along with their mothers were taken and were grouped into experimental (49) and control (5) infants, effective and timely intervention in the form of lectures and discussions were given to the mothers of experimental group. Bradley's home inventory was modified and used along with a self developed questionnaire containing aspects of child care. The results showed that although the mothers and their infants in both groups had similar scores on home environment and knowledge, significant differences existed in the final post testing where the experimental group had better scores than control group. It was also seen that infants whose mothers had good knowledge about nursing, feeding, immunizations also had a better home environment.

Keywords : Interaction, Questionnaire, Majority, Conducive, Infancy Nursing

Introduction

Infancy is one of the most important periods of growth and development. It is in this phase that the foundations of child's personality, behavioral patterns, learning mechanisms and attitudes towards self and others are laid.

A child develops out of the interaction between nature and nurture. It is true that the kind of stimuli and support given by the environment makes a great deal of difference to development. A child who receives help and encouragement will develop more of her potential than one with a less supportive one (Swaminathan 1999).

A conducive home is the one that provides a congenial atmosphere for the growth and development of the child. Mother is sensitive and responsive to the needs of the children. The warmth, security and love bestowed upon the infants have a strong impact on the attachment bonds that continue to strengthen and string with his survival and betterment. In aspects of child's development i.e, physical mental intellectual and psychological, the most important influence is the mother's role in child care. She has to regulate the behaviour attitudes, outlook and environment in a family since these are the basic factors influencing the growth of children.

Majority of the infants and young children in our country especially in the rural areas do not receive the required rich environment and stimulation at home for the natural growth and development. This is mainly due to poverty and ignorance and lack of awareness regarding developmental aspects of children part of the mothers. Thus, a study was planned in order to find out the home environment of infants, and their mother's knowledge regarding child care.

Methodology

Sample

The study was conducted in two urban rural areas ie- Maharajpur and Shivrajpur blocks of Kanpur (U.P) A total sample of 108 infants both male and female of age birth to 18 months along with their mothers with selected. The sample was divided into two groups – experimental group having 49 infants and their mothers and control group consisting of 59 infants and their mothers.

Tools used

A modified version of running inventory by Bradley and Caldwell was used to assess the home environment of infants. A self developed questionnaire was used to know the knowledge of mothers on child care which include aspects of pregnancy, nursing infant care and nutrition, health of child and child's growth and behaviour.



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Method (Procedure)

Pre-testing was done to find out the status of home environment and mother's knowledge for both the groups. An educational intervention was given to the mothers of experimental group regarding various facts of child-care, feeding practices, immunization, children's developmental milestones, nutrition- health and hygiene and conducive home environment for infants. The mothers in experimental group were encouraged and motivated to adopt the practices for betterment of their infants. An intervention also given to them for a period of eighteen months with final post testing after one and a half- year to both experimental and control groups. Means and percentage along with 'T' test and 'F' test were used to find out the significant differences between the two groups at final post testing.

Results and discussions

The modified version of home inventory was categorized into groups – verbal responsibility, acceptance of behaviour, organization of environment, provision of boys parents involvement with child and father's rule. Scores were calculated and the mean scores for home environment during pre and post testing were taken into account. It can be seen from Table 1 that infants in both groups had almost similar scores of home environment at pre testing and at the time of post – testing experimental group infants showed more increase in the scores than control group. Then the different categories of them are taken into account, the homes of the experimental group, infants had more mean scores than the control group. This shows that infants in experimental group had better home environment than control group at post testing. This difference can be seen especially in the category of provision of toys.

Table 1

Home Environment of infants during pre and post testing				
Variables of Home Environment	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test
Verbal responsibility	8.93	10.0	9.19	9.97
Acceptance of Behaviour	10.06	12.0	10.72	9.96
Organization of environment	5.0	6.0	5.44	5.38
Provisionary toys	22.9	28.85	21.59	22.33
Parents Involvement	4.37	4.85	3.99	4.11
Father's role	5.84	5.87	5.60	5.39
Total mean scores	57.1	67.57	56.53	57.11

Table 2**Mother's Knowledge during Pre and post testing**

Variables of Mother's Knowledge	Experimental group		Control Group	
	Pre Test	Post test	Pre Test	Post Test
Pregnancy	24.05	34.95	23.75	29.68
Nursing	13.0	13.25	13.07	12.7
Infant Care	18.0	23.72	18.67	21.32
Nutrition	11.0	17.5	9.90	15.19
Health of child	18.52	26.03	18.12	22.17
Child's growth	10.29	11.21	10.80	10.88
Child's behaviour	203.69	26.61	20.43	24.60
Total mean Scores	115.55	153.27	114.74	136.54

Likewise, inventory concerning mother's knowledge on child-care was divided into seven

categories of pregnancy, nursing, infant care, nutrition, health of child, child's growth and behaviour. Scores were calculated and it was seen that both groups of mothers had similar levels of knowledge during pre-testing but the mothers of experimental group had significant increase in their mean scores at post testing. (Table 2 and 3).

Table – 3**Comparison of Home Environment and Mother's knowledge between Experimental and control group**

Variables	Pre Test			Post Test		
	Exp Group	Control Group	t-value	Exp Group	Control Group	t-value
Mother's knowledge	115.55	114.74	0.224	153.27	136.54	18.118
Home Environment	57.1	56.53	0.489	67.57	57.11	16.285

It was also seen that during the post testing, mothers of experimental group had better scores in all categories than control group. The results on the comparison between the two groups on the two variables indicated significant differences between the groups thus indicating the positive impact of intervention.

The results of the study indicated a better environment of homes of experimental group infants at post testing. This can be attributed to the fact that the mothers in this group were given proper education and knowledge about the children's safety measures in names, conducive environment etc. The mothers were encouraged and motivated to use the information provided to them in their family life.

The findings are in association with studies by shubhangna et. al. (2008) and Anupama (1998) who observed that the quality of home environment enhanced significantly as a result of intervention provided to mothers.

It was also found that when the experimental group mothers were made aware of the scientific reasons of the practices and affects of child care along with information on stimulating home environment, striking differences were seen after the post testing.

It is also worth mentioning that infants who had good and stimulating home environment were those whose mothers were well versed with the aspects of child care. Thus we can see that the most important contribution to the child's development comes from mother's. Mother's role is vital in providing health, safety comfort and nutrition, providing equipments, materials and activities and providing love, understanding stimulation and guidance. If mothers and caregivers are made fully aware of the importance of a stimulatory home environment and other aspects of child care, infants and young children will be most benefited by the proper child rearing practices.

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