

Mental Health of Parents of Normal and Disabled Children

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Abstract

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community. The present study's main objective was to compare the mental health status among parents of normal and special children. For this purpose, the investigator has selected a sample of 30 parents of normal children and 30 parents of disabled children (30 to 40 years) from various special and normal schools of Anand and Kheda districts of Gujarat state. Mental health was measured through the mental health Scale developed by Bhaat, D.J. Findings of present research revealed that mental health traits were influenced by the types of parents. The parents of normal children have better mental health than the parents of special need children. Intervention programs must be taken into account to increase the mental health of parents with disabled children.

Keywords: Mental Health, Disabled children, Parents, Reality, Personality.

Introduction

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community. Mental health includes our social, emotional, psychological and well-being. It affects how people think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how individuals handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

According to WHO, mental health is "more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities." Peak mental health is about not only avoiding operational conditions but also looking after ongoing wellness and happiness. They also stress that preserving and restoring mental health is critical on an individual basis, as well as throughout different communities and societies globally.

Parenting of differently-abled children has been consistently associated with anxiety, depression, stress, and low mental health. Findings of various research highlighted that some children of parents with a severe and enduring mental illness experience greater levels of emotional, psychological and behavioural problems than children and young people in the rest of the population.

Guillamón, N. et al. (2013) reported that quality of life and mental health could be affected in caregivers of children with cerebral palsy. Personal resources like self-efficacy also need attention as they can help understand the differences in these outcomes and the design of effective interventions. **RELEVANCE OF CLINICAL PRACTICE:** Self-efficacy should be a key element in interventions addressed to parents of children with CP to elicit a process of empowerment that can improve the family's well-being as a whole.

Sui-Qing Chen et al. (2020) indicated that there were significant differences among parents of children with different disabilities. Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder were more likely to have mental health problems compared to parents whose children had an intellectual disability or a visual or hearing impairment. Behavioural problems of children and psychological demands of parents were common factors predicting all parents' mental health. Parent-child dysfunctional interactions and parenting distress were associated with parents of children with an autism spectrum disorder. Family support, having a difficult child, and parenting distress were associated with having children with an intellectual

disability. It is necessary to pay attention to the parent's mental health, provide more social and family support, and reduce parenting pressures.

Marquis SM, Mc Grail K, Hayes M (2020) reported that at a population level, the study found strong evidence those parents of children who have a developmental disability experience higher odds of depression or other mental health diagnoses compared with parents of children who do not have a developmental disability. Age of the parent at birth of the child, income and location of healthcare services were all associated with outcomes. Parents of children who have a developmental disability may be in need of programmes and services that support their mental health.

Statement of Problem

The present study's focal objective has been to compare the scores of mental health among parents of disabled and normal children. The present research's exact problem is "Mental Health of Parents of Normal and Disabled Children."

Objective of the Study

To assess and compare the mental health status among parents of normal and disabled children.

Hypotheses

(H0₁) There will be no significant difference in the scores of mental health dimension perception of reality between parents of normal and disabled children.

(H0₂) There will be no significant difference in the scores of mental health dimension Structured

Personality between parents of normal and disabled children.

(H0₃) There will be no significant difference in the scores of mental health dimension Positive self-evaluation between parents of normal and disabled children.

(H0₄) There will be no significant difference in the scores of mental health dimension Group moral between parents of normal and disabled children.

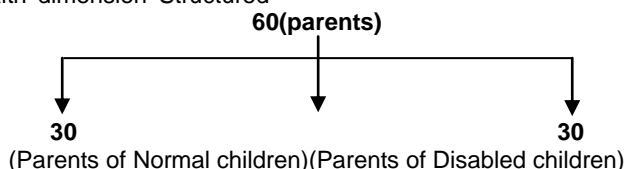
(H0₅) There will be no significant difference in the scores of mental health dimension Hold on Environment between parents of disabled and normal children.

Research Design

The present study is not possible experimentally because of the nature of the investigation. The researcher adopted quantitative descriptive research for gaining the objectives of the study. The survey quantitative research method was employed in which the event has already occurred, and the effects of the variables were studied by qualitative analysis.

Sample

Initially, a sample of 80 parents was selected. Finally, 60 parents were chosen between age ranges of 30 to 40 years. Further, they were classified into two groups i.e. parents of normal children (30) and parents of special children (30). The categorization and detail of sample selection is as under:-



Inclusion Criteria

1. Parents who were in the age group of 30 – 40 years.
2. Parents those were willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Parents those had medical and psychological disorders were not included

Tool

The mental health Inventory was developed and standardization by Bhatt, D. J. and Geeda, G. R. (1992). In this scale 40 statements were included pertaining to five domains. The domains are namely perception of reality, structured personality, positive self-evolution, group moral and hold on environment to be rated a 2-point scale. In this scale statements no. 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 33, 34, 37, 38 are negative and others are positive. Which statements are positive and for agree, disagree, 0, 1 score is used. Reliability of present study is checked by three methods in which 0.81 by logical similarity

0.94 by half divided method, and test, re-test has 0.87.

Procedure

For the data collection, Google form of questioner was developed by the by theinvestigators. A Google meet was conducted with subjects to explain instruction of scale. It was also made clear to them about confidentiality of scores. All the subjects were requested to respond all the questions of the questioner.

Scoring

Scoring of the obtained data was done with help of respective manuals available for the tests in the present investigation. The data have been arranged in the respective table according to the statistical test applied.

Statistical Analysis

In the present research work to find out the significant mean difference between scores of parents of normal and disabled children with reference to mental health, statistical measures like independent sample 't'tests, Mean and SD were conducted.

Results & Discussion**Table 1 – Showing Mean, SD & 't' Values for Mental Health Dimensions between Parents of Normal Children and Parents with Disabled Children**

Dimensions of Mental Health	Types of Parents	N	Mean	SD	SEM	't'	Sig. Level
Perception of reality	Parents of Normal Children	30	20.80	3.13	.57	3.33	$p < .01$
	Parents of Special Children	30	17.03	5.32	.97		
Structured Personality	Parents of Normal Children	30	20.00	2.79	.51	2.59	$p < .01$
	Parents of Special Children	30	18.03	4.62	.84		
Positive self-evaluation	Parents of Normal Children	30	20.23	3.26	.59	3.98	$p < .01$
	Parents of Special Children	30	16.03	4.75	.86		
Group moral	Parents of Normal Children	30	19.76	3.33	.60	2.29	$p < .05$
	Parents of Special Children	30	17.46	4.36	.79		
Hold on Environment	Parents of Normal Children	30	19.46	2.41	.44	.69	NS
	Parents of Special Children	30	18.90	3.88	.70		

A perusal of table 1.1 shows that the two groups under study i.e. parents of normal children and parents of disabled children differ significantly on the mental health dimension Perception of reality. The significant mean difference is to be reported for the Perception of reality between parents of normal and disabled children ($t=3.33, p<.01$). The parents of normal children have scored higher mean ($M=20.80, SD=3.13$) than the parents of special children ($M=17.03, SD=5.32$). Therefore, H_{01} is declined, it may be said that parents of normal children have better perception of reality as compared to parents of disabled children.

As seen from table 1.2 that parent of normal children and parents of disabled children have significant difference on mental health dimension structured personality. The 't' ratio is displayed significant ($t=2.59, p<.01$). The mean score of parents of normal and special children are 20.00 (2.79) and 18.03(4.62) respectively. Thus, H_{02} was rejected. Parents of normal children have more structured personality in comparison of parents of special need children.

As table 1.3 depicted that mental health trait positive self-evaluation was influenced by types of parents. The 't' value is highlighted ($t= 3.98$) which was significant at 0.01. The mean value scored by parents of general and special children were 20.23 (3.26) and 16.03 (4.75) respectively. Therefore, H_{03} was discarded. Parents of normal children have more positive self-evaluation than the parents of impaired children.

The table no.1.4 indicated that parents of normal children have higher ($M= 19.76, SD=3.33$) group moral than the parents of disabled children ($M= 17.46, SD=4.36$). The mean difference is recorded significant ($t=2.29, p<.05$), hence, H_{04} was also refused.

Both the groups of parents have similar level of hold on environment, The 't' value is exposed non-significant ($t= 0.69, p>.05$). The mean scores obtained for parents of normal children and special children were 19.46 (2.41) and 18.90 (3.88) respectively. Thus, H_{05} was accepted.

Conclusion

On the basis of above results it can be concluded that parents of normal children have better mental health as compared to parents of children with special needs. Most of parents taking care of children with disabilities experience psychological distress in India and rest of world. This study encourages mental health care providers and psychologists to pay more attention to the mental health of parents of differently abled children, especially for parents with severe disabled children, having health problems of their own, activity restrictions, or low social support and for low income families.

Recommendations

Attention should be paid to stress, anxiety and depression level of the parents with disabled children by imparting education including short term parents training programs, professional guidance and counseling services.

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