

HEALTH AWARENESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Health is Wealth. Health of school children is of prime importance. Most of the students are unaware of their health, even though the schools have a number of programmes to promote the health. Health education motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviors. Health education curricula and instruction help students learn skills which will use to make healthy choices throughout their lifetime. The present study is a search into the health awareness of secondary school students. The aim of the study is to find out the extent of health awareness among secondary school students. Data was collected from 132 secondary school students by using an awareness test. Findings showed that the health awareness of secondary school students is low and there is no difference in the health awareness between boys and girls. But there is significant difference in health awareness of students of government and government- aided schools. Healthy people constitute a healthy nation. Health awareness is to be given to students through all possible ways.

Keywords: Health awareness



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Introduction: 'Health is Wealth' a proverb which is apt in all times. Healthy people constitute a healthy nation. Therefore it is the fundamental duty of a country to provide good health to all its citizens. At the same time one must have adequate knowledge of how to live healthy. During ancient period, acquiring knowledge and developing attitudes and skills for healthy living was an integral part of socio cultural life of people. People followed daily and seasonal regimens that were prescribed by culture and religion. There were do's and don'ts to be followed for regain health. The real health educators were parents, family, local physicians, and teachers of religion and community leaders. The wisdom, attitudes and skills of these people were passed on from generation to generation.

Schools can be dynamic settings for promoting health, for enabling children to grow and mature into healthy adults. School health has largely remained confined to medical check-ups of children or some hours of health instruction in the curriculum. Health in case of school children is the prime concern of all stakeholders including principals, parents, teachers, and

the community. Educationists like Rousseau, Froebel, and Pestalozzi gave importance to the physical development of the child. They highlighted the development of health skills and physique through practical engagements with play, exercise, sports and practices of personal and community hygiene. Each and every child should know what is health and healthy living.

-The state of being free from illness is called as a health- Oxford dictionary.

- The establishment of W.H.O. occurred on 7 April 1948- a date we now celebrate every year as World Health Day. Its establishment is followed by a period of discussion and consultation following World War II. "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"- World Health Organization (WHO).

-Nature has bestowed upon us, six doctors. Utilize them to add to your health, to the energy of the body. According to Parkhiji (2005),If Health is the question, the answer is Air, Nutrition, Sunlight, Water, Exercise, and Relaxation.

Health education helps to build students' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes about health. It motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviors. Health education curricula and instruction help students learn skills which will use to make healthy choices throughout their lifetime. Effective curricula result in positive changes in behavior of students. Media reports show that school students are more involved in drugs and like intoxicants. This will surely affect their career, future life and mental and physical health. Health education promotes learning in other subjects. Numerous studies have shown that healthier students tend to do better in school. They have higher attendance, have better grades, and perform better on tests.

Babatunde (2017) conducted a study on Influence of Health Education and Healthy Lifestyle on Students' Academic Achievement in Biology in Nigeria. The result showed that three independent variables- Health Education, Risk Behavior, and Value for good Health, were found to have significant relative prediction on students' achievement. It is therefore recommended that health education should be made mandatory for all students in the secondary school to enable them to form and develop a healthy lifestyle.

Schools can be dynamic settings for promoting health, for enabling children to grow and mature into healthy adults. School health programmes include medical check- ups and some hours of health instruction through the curriculum. The CBSE suggests that schools plan out a comprehensive School Health Club in each school to begin with. Health and

wellness clubs in schools would focus on the overall well being comprising emotional, social, and mental health of the child.

Today school curriculum finds its place on health education along with first aid education. Many recent studies suggested that health education in schools promote awareness in First Aid, Personal hygiene, food and clothing, communicable diseases, health related physical fitness and sex education.

Awareness on health is an essential aspect for the success of the school. Presently our society is witnessed by a number of epidemics. Earlier diseases like cholera, mumps etc. are again spreading in our society. The food habits and such behaviours lead the man to acute health problems also. According to Gore (2012) health education is an ongoing activity and education and health are inseparable and therefore active involvement of school teachers is needed for health education. Gupta and Bhatia (2017) suggested the components health instruction, school health services, and school health supervisory committee, in schools as part of health education.

The three dimensions of health are physical, mental and social. Physical health means proper functioning of the system and physical well being of the body. Mental health is the balanced development of the individual's personality and emotional attitudes which enable him to live harmoniously with his fellow beings. Social health is the ability to get along with oneself and with others.

In recent decades the world has seen a rise in non communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart diseases. So WHO has shifted focus along with health authorities around the world, to promote healthy eating, physical exercise, and regular checks. Today we are faced with a number of health problems that require individual action. Bringing about that action requires education. It is found that the secondary school curriculum is with inputs of health components and this is transacted by teachers also. The present study is intended to find out the awareness on health among secondary school students.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the extent of health awareness among secondary school students
- To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the mean scores of awareness on health for the subsamples based on gender, and type of management.

Methodology

The study was conducted on a sample of 132 secondary school students from Malappuram district. A general health awareness test is prepared and used to collect data from the sample.

The maximum score of the test was 27. The study made use of statistical techniques such as preliminary analysis, and Test of significance of difference between mean scores.

Analysis and Results

- The extent of health awareness among secondary school students

The total sample of the study was 132 secondary school students. The mean score obtained for the total sample was 12.81 and the standard deviation was 3.19. The analysis shows that the secondary school students are having low awareness in health.

- Data and results of the test of significance of difference between mean scores for the subsamples based on gender and type of management

The test of significance of difference between mean scores for the subsamples based on gender and type of management are given in table 1.

Table 1 Data and results of the test of significance of difference between mean scores for the subsamples based on gender and type of management.

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	S.D	t value
Health Awareness	Girls	81	12.73	3.30	.372ns
	Boys	51	12.94	3.02	
	Govt	44	14.61	3.19	5.00**
	Aided	88	11.90	2.80	

From the table it is found that the mean scores obtained for the subsample girls and boys are 12.73 and 12.94 respectively. The standard deviation was 3.30 for girls and 3.02 for boys. And the t value obtained was .372 which is less than the tabled value of t (1.96) required for significance level .05. It indicates that the mean difference scores of awareness on health among secondary school students based on gender is not significant at .05 level. The meaning is there exists no significant difference between boys and girls in their awareness on health.

The mean and standard deviation of the subsamples based on type of management is calculated. From the table it is evident that the mean score obtained by students from government school is 14.61 and that of aided is 11.90. The standard deviation was 3.19 and 2.80 respectively for students of government and aided schools. The difference between the mean scores was calculated. The obtained t value is 5.0 which is higher than the tabled value of t (2.58) required for significance at .01 level. This shows that there is significant difference

in the mean scores of awareness on health among secondary school students based on type of management.

From the above findings it could be understood that the health awareness of secondary school students is low and there is no difference in the health awareness between boys and girls. But there is significant difference in health awareness between the secondary school students of government and government- aided schools. This shows that more and more health awareness programmes are to be organized in secondary schools. Curriculum should be strengthened with health and related aspects. Health education is very necessary to promote the health of the child and thus development of the community.

Conclusion

The destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms. The healthy school society is always aware of the health of the people. The knowledge given in the secondary stage lasts long in their life. So classes are to be given to them besides the routine check ups and examination of their health. As part of these a concern of the teachers about the health of their students will give a strong society.

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