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KNOWLEDGE OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS ABOUT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the communicable diseases knowledge of Higher secondary students in relation to their mental health. Communicable diseases knowledge test is constructed and validated by the investigator and mental health inventory is standardized by Jagadish&A.K.Srivastava. Eight hundred higher secondary students studying in Ramanathapuram educational district are selected as sample through random sampling technique. The normative survey method is used in the study. The major findings indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge and mental health and there is significant positive relationship between communicable diseases knowledge and mental health.

Keywords: Communicable diseases knowledge, Mental health.

INTRODUCTION

The past two centuries of the Globe have seen enormous achievements in control of infectious diseases, previously the leading cause of death, in large measure due to sanitation and food safety, vaccines, antibiotics and improved nutrition. This has led people to put their faith in the notion that medical science would succeed in overcoming the remaining obstacles. Vaccination has eradicated smallpox, nearly eradicated poliomyelitis and greatly reduced many other highly dangerous infections such as diphtheria, tetanus and measles. Tragically long delays in adopting "new" and cost effective vaccines cause hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths each year in developing and mid-level developed countries. Gains are being made in control of many tropical diseases, but malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases remain enormous global problems. Research and acquisition of new knowledge, risk communication, application of currently available means and fair distribution will be great a challenge to public health in the coming decades. Mental health is the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The burden of communicable diseases is an increasing trend in developing countries. Rural and minority population are underserved and likely to be affected severely by these burdens. Knowledge among young people could provide immunity to such diseases within a community in the long term. Mental health is an important psychological factor which may affect the knowledge of communicable diseases. Keeping the above said in the researcher aimed to assess the knowledge of several highly incident communicable diseases among higher secondary school students. It is needless to say higher secondary stage is an important and crucial one, in which the destiny of the students has been decided.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out if there is any significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge.
2. To find out if there is any significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their mental health.
3. To find out if there is any significant relationship between communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge.

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2. There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their mental health.
3. There is no significant relationship between communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the investigator followed normative survey method. The normative survey method studies, describes and interprets what exists at present.

Location of the Study:

The investigator collected information from the higher secondary schools in Tamilnadu State. For this study, as many as 39 higher secondary schools from Ramanathapuram district were selected for data collection.

Sample of the Study:

A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. The present study consists of 800 higher secondary students studying in higher secondary schools in Ramanathapuram district. The sample was selected by using random sampling technique. The sample forms a representative sample of the entire population.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Null Hypothesis No: 1

There is no significant difference between the male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge.

Table 1. Mean Difference between Male and Female Higher Secondary Student's Communicable Diseases Knowledge

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S. D	't' value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Communicable diseases knowledge	Male	323	25.08	4.17	1.90	Not Significant
	Female	477	25.65	4.20		

Interpretation:

The 't' value is found to be 1.90 and it is not significant. Hence the null hypothesis No.1 is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge.

Null Hypothesis No: 2

There is no significant difference between the male and female higher secondary students in respect of their mental health.

Table 2. Mean Difference between Male and Female Higher Secondary Student's Mental Health

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S. D	't' value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Mental health	Male	323	135.22	12.23	1.20	Not Significant
	Female	477	134.13	13.17		

*Interpretation:*

The 't' value is found to be 1.20 and it is not significant. Hence the null hypothesis No.2 is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their mental health.

Null Hypothesis No: 3

There is no significant relationship between the communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students.

Table 3. Relationship between Knowledge of Communicable Diseases and Mental Health

Communicable diseases' knowledge and mental health	Correlation value 'r'	Level of significance at 0.05 level
	0.29	S

Interpretation:

The 'r' value is found to be 0.29 and it is positive and significant. Hence, the null hypothesis No.3 is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant relationship between the communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge.
- There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their mental health.
- There is significant positive relationship between communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students.

Discussion

The result of the study indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their communicable diseases knowledge. This finding is similar to the finding of Hassan Khan, et.al. (2006) that is, 'Gender was not a significant predictor of knowledge about health research'. This study also reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in respect of their mental health. This finding is contradictory to the finding of Bandhana, Darshana, and P.Sharma. (2010). There is significant positive relationship between communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn. Gender did not have significant influence on the communicable diseases knowledge and mental health of higher secondary students and there is significant relationship between mental health and the communicable diseases knowledge of higher secondary students. Hence the desirable mental health should be maintained to impart a new knowledge on communicable diseases. Health education and knowledge about common and communicable diseases are yet to be promoted among the students. A broader and more comprehensive school-based health education strategy for prevention of communicable diseases would benefit the rural minority population.

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