

7-1-2015

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Recommended Citation

Varughese, Sara Ms; George, Linu Sara Dr; and D'Souza, Prima J J Ms (2015) "Effectiveness of interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide," *Manipal Journal of Nursing and Health Sciences*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, .

Available at: <https://impressions.manipal.edu/mjnhs/vol1/iss2/3>

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Effectiveness of interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide

Cover Page Footnote

Sincere thanks to all the participants in the study.

Effectiveness of interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide

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Abstract

Background: Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Indian adolescents. The school personnel play an important role in the prevention of adolescent suicides. **Aims and objectives:** The study aimed at assessing the knowledge on prevention of adolescent suicide as measured by a knowledge questionnaire and determine the effectiveness of an interactive session in terms of gain in knowledge scores. **Materials and methods:** The study comprised 68 high school teachers conveniently selected from eight English medium high schools of Udupi Taluk. One group pre-test post-test design was used. The pre-test on prevention of suicide was conducted on the first day using structured knowledge questionnaire and post-test was conducted after seven days of completion of the interactive session. **Results:** Most of the participants in the study were females (86.8%). The age group of 21-30 years comprised 35.3 per cent, the educational qualification of B Sc B Ed, 51.5 per cent and teaching experience of 1-10 years, 58.8 per cent. Nearly half of the participants (48.5%) had average knowledge in the pre-test and about 69.1 per cent found to have good knowledge in post-test. There was significant improvement ($Z=6.851, p=0.001$) in knowledge after the interactive session. **Conclusion:** Study results conclude that interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide has a significant effect on gaining knowledge among teachers.

Key words: Effectiveness, Interactive session, Knowledge, High school teachers.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major health problems in adolescents is suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth in the world (Hawton, Saunders, & Connor, 2012). According to WHO SUPRE (suicide prevention), suicide rate in the world has increased to 60 per cent in the past 45 years. A survey conducted by Kanchan & Menezes (2008) on mortalities among adolescents and children of 1-19 years of age, suggest that 15.9 per cent deaths were due to poisoning as an attempt to suicide. A teacher has a major role in preventing suicide among school students. The personnel in the school, mainly the teachers who are regularly interacting with students, are able to identify the students at risk and help them to overcome from the distress.

Wendy & Rosalyn (1998) aimed at assessing the knowledge and the attitude of the teachers and clergy regarding suicide. The study showed lack of

knowledge and skill in dealing with suicidal people $F(2, 75) = 4.01, p < .05$. Teachers and clergy, when approached by suicidal young people, were not able to identify and refer them to the professionals due to lack knowledge on the risk factors of suicide. Another study conducted by King & Smith (2000) involving 186 school counsellors assessed the effectiveness of the project SOAR (Suicide, Options, Awareness and Relief) training programme on knowledge and confidence regarding suicide prevention. The project was found to be effective in improving the knowledge among those who attended the SOAR training programme $F(1, 148) = 5.40, p = .021$ than who did not attend it.

As the adolescent suicide rate is increasing, there is a need for awareness among teachers. Therefore a study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding prevention of adolescent suicide for high school teachers and to evaluate the effectiveness

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of interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted among 68 teachers from conveniently selected eight English medium high schools in Udupi Taluk, Karnataka, for a period of one month adopting an evaluative approach and one group pre-test post-test design. The inclusion criteria were high school teachers working in English medium school, who were available at the time of data collection and gave consent to participate in the study. Approval from institutional ethics committee and informed consent from the participants were obtained.

The tools used in the study included demographic proforma and structured knowledge questionnaire which consisted the following areas: meaning, incidence, risk factors, warning signs, prevention and misconceptions on adolescent suicide. Maximum score was 36. Knowledge scores were further classified, ranging from 0-9 (*poor*), 10 to 18 (*average*), 19 to 27 (*good*) and 28 to 36 (*excellent*). Content validity of the tool was established. Reliability was established by Split half method ($r=0.84$).

DATA COLLECTION

On the day one, the demographic proforma and the structured knowledge questionnaire on prevention of adolescent suicide were given to the teachers. The information was collected and the interactive session was subsequently held. On the eighth day, the post-test was conducted by administering the same structured questionnaire.

INTERACTIVE SESSION

The content of the interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide was developed based on the literature review and opinions from the experts. The areas in the session included meaning, incidence, risk factors, warning signs, prevention and misconceptions on adolescent suicide. Interactive session was conducted in groups in each school, which included group as well as individual activities. The session started with a game for the group involvement. One group activity was conducted with the help of scenarios, to identify risk factors and warning signs. Another activity

was conducted by dividing the group into small groups of two to three teachers, where they had to explain the misconceptions. Individual activity was conducted with the help of checklist on prevention of suicide. The session was conducted over one hour using PowerPoint slides as audio visual aids and English medium was adopted. The collected data was analyzed based on the objectives by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Twenty four (35.3%) of the participants in the study were in the age group of 21-30 years. Majority [59 (86.8%)] were females. About half [35 (51.5%)] of the teachers had the educational qualification of B Sc B Ed. Majority of them, 40 (58.8%), have the teaching experience of 1-10 years. About two third of the teachers [45(66.2%)] did not have any previous knowledge about the prevention of adolescent suicide.

Description of knowledge scores of high school teachers on prevention of adolescent suicide

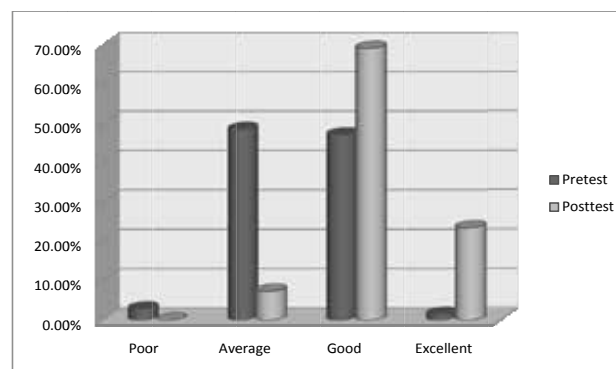


Fig 1: Bar diagram represents pretest-posttest knowledge score of high school teachers

The data in Figure 1 shows that 48 per cent of the participants had average score in the pre-test and 69.1 per cent had good score in the post-test. Thus, the findings of the study infer that there was an improvement in the knowledge.

Effectiveness of interactive session on prevention of adolescent suicide:

Shapiro Wilk test was used to check normality. As per this test, the knowledge scores were not normally

distributed. So, non-parametric test (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test) was used to find the effectiveness of the interactive session. There was a significant improvement in the knowledge score after the interactive session ($Z= 6.851$, $p< 0.05$). Median, inter quartile range and z value of pre-test and post-test knowledge scores are described in the Table 1.

Table 1: Median, inter quartile range and Z value of pre-test and post-test knowledge scores (n=68)

	Median	IQR	Z value	p value
Pre-test	18	16-21	6.851	<0.001*
Post-test	25	21-27		

DISCUSSION

The present study showed that the teachers had average knowledge regarding the prevention of adolescent suicide. A study conducted by Wendy & Rosalyn (1998) on suicide in Australia among teachers and clergy had revealed low knowledge about suicide (61 per cent had scored poor and 13 per cent had average scores) among the participants. Another study conducted by Kylie & David (2000) on prevention of suicide among youth found that only 59 per cent of teachers answered correctly the Adolescent Suicide Behaviour Questionnaire.

In the present study, interactive session has shown significant improvement in knowledge scores among teachers. Cross, Seaburn & Caine (2011) conducted a study on effectiveness of gatekeeper training programme on suicide prevention among school staffs and parents. They reported improved knowledge from pre to post training ($p<0.001$). The project SOAR also was found effective in improving the knowledge among those who attended the SOAR training programme $F(1, 148) = 5.40$, $p = 0.021$ than those who did not attend the training programme (King & Smith, 2000). Another study conducted by Walsh, Hooven & Kronick (2013) found that training regarding suicide risk awareness among high school staff was highly satisfactory $M = 5.18$ on a 0-6 scale, $SD=1.03$, $p<0.001$.

CONCLUSION

Teachers will be able to monitor the student's behaviour and actions, and are able to respond quickly when they are at a risk of suicide or self-harm.

The interactive session will enhance the confidence of the teachers in dealing the students with suicidal ideation. The study revealed that interactive session helps in improving knowledge among High School teachers on prevention of adolescent suicide.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks to all the participants in the study.

Sources of support: None

Conflict of interest: None declared

Source of support in form of grants: None

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