

Knowledge and perceptions of newly married women on vaccine preventable diseases among children : An intervention study

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Significant improvement in the health status of children has been achieved since the attainment of independence. In spite of active efforts, a large number of children still remain without protection of immunization. One of the important reasons for the failure of immunization was lack of information and superstitious beliefs and practices of mothers. For making immunization programme successful, it is essential to break down the barriers of ignorance, prejudices, mis-conceptions and dangerous traditional practices among the people and provide learning experience which favourably influence their knowledge, perceptions and practices. Keeping this in view this study was planned to find out the existing knowledge, perceptions and practices of newly married women regarding vaccine preventable diseases among children, to study the effect of an intervention programme in the knowledge and perceptions and to find out the socio-economic and psychological factors affecting the knowledge, perceptions and practices.

The study was conducted in slum areas (J. J. Clusters) of Delhi state. Young mothers were taken as the respondents in this study. Knowledge, perceptions and practices were studied as the dependent variables. Three important vaccine preventable diseases prevalent among children, namely, diphtheria, whooping cough and measles were included in the study. The quasi-experimental design was used to study the effects of the intervention program.

The results indicated the knowledge of the respondents about these three diseases i.e., whooping cough, diphtheria and measles was extremely poor. The knowledge of the respondents of one zone was found to be significantly higher than that of the respondents of the other 4 zones. Of the five aspects of these diseases, the respondents had more knowledge about the aspect symptoms of disease. The perceptions of the respondents about these diseases were non-scientific. The practices of the respondents about these diseases were extremely poor.

There was no significant difference between two groups on any of the variables except that the respondents of control group had better mass media exposure than the respondents of experimental group. The post-intervention knowledge of the respondents of experimental group was higher than the pre-intervention knowledge on all the three diseases. The gain in the knowledge of the respondents of experimental group after intervention was higher than that of the control group for all the three

diseases. There was no difference in the pre-intervention perception scores of the respondents of experimental and control group for all the three diseases. The post-intervention perception scores of the respondents of experimental group was higher than the pre-intervention perception scores on all the three diseases. The gain in the perceptions of the respondents of experimental group after intervention was higher than that of the control group for all the three diseases.

The post-intervention practice scores of the respondents of experimental group was higher than the pre-intervention practice scores on all the three diseases. . The post-intervention practice scores of the respondents of experimental group was higher than that of the control group for all the diseases. The gain in the practices of the respondents of experimental group after intervention was higher than that of the control group for all the three diseases.