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Research Article

Knowledge Regarding Precocious Puberty Among Women Residing in a Selected Community of New Delhi: A Descriptive Study

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Puberty is a normal developmental process associated with hormonal, physical, emotional, and social changes that ultimately lead to reproductive maturity. When pubertal changes occur earlier than the expected age, the condition is known as precocious puberty. Early pubertal development may affect the physical and psychological health of children and can create challenges for both parents and caregivers. Awareness among women regarding the early signs and consequences of precocious puberty is essential for timely diagnosis and management. Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding precocious puberty among women residing in a selected community of New Delhi.

Methods: A quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted among 100 women residing in PSMS Kalkaji, New Delhi. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected through a self-developed structured questionnaire related to causes, symptoms, complications, prevention, and management of precocious puberty. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, median, and mode were used for data analysis. Informational pamphlets regarding precocious puberty were distributed following data collection.

Results: The study findings showed that 58% of women had average knowledge regarding precocious puberty, whereas 24% demonstrated good knowledge and 18% had poor knowledge. The mean knowledge score was 6.5, while the median and mode were 8 and 7 respectively. Most participants had not received prior information regarding precocious puberty.

Discussion: The findings indicate that knowledge regarding precocious puberty among community women was limited. Lack of awareness may contribute to delayed recognition and treatment of early pubertal changes among children. Community-based educational programmes and health awareness activities can improve understanding and encourage timely healthcare-seeking behavior among parents and caregivers.

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Keywords: Precocious Puberty, Knowledge, Community Women, Awareness, Health Education

Introduction

Puberty is a significant phase of human growth and development characterized by physical, hormonal, emotional, and psychological changes that result in sexual maturation and reproductive capability. During this period, secondary sexual characteristics develop and adolescents experience rapid physical growth and behavioural changes.

Precocious puberty refers to the appearance of pubertal changes at an unusually early age, generally before 8 years in girls and before 9 years in boys. Early breast development in girls and testicular enlargement in boys are common indicators of the condition. Precocious puberty may occur due to premature activation of hormonal pathways or because of conditions that increase sex hormone production independent of normal pubertal mechanisms.

The occurrence of precocious puberty has increased globally over the past few decades. Various factors such as obesity, genetic influences, hormonal imbalance, neurological conditions, environmental exposure, and lifestyle changes have been associated with its development. Children affected by precocious puberty may experience short adult stature, emotional stress, behavioural problems, and difficulties in social adjustment.

Women and caregivers are often the first to notice developmental changes in children; therefore, adequate awareness regarding precocious puberty is important for early identification and treatment. However, limited community knowledge regarding the condition may delay medical consultation and intervention. Hence, the present study was undertaken to assess the knowledge regarding precocious puberty among women residing in a selected community of New Delhi.

Need of The Study

Precocious puberty has emerged as an important child health concern due to its increasing incidence and associated physical and psychological consequences. Early pubertal changes may adversely affect growth, emotional well-being, and social interactions among children if timely intervention is not provided.

Community women, especially mothers and caregivers, play an important role in recognizing early developmental changes in children. However, inadequate awareness regarding the signs, causes, complications, and management of precocious puberty may contribute to delayed diagnosis and treatment. Therefore, assessing the level of knowledge among women is necessary to identify existing gaps and plan appropriate educational interventions.

The present study was conducted to evaluate the knowledge regarding precocious puberty among women residing in a selected community of New Delhi and to provide educational information through an informational pamphlet.

Objectives of The Study

- To assess the knowledge regarding precocious puberty among women residing in a selected community of New Delhi.
- To develop and disseminate an informational pamphlet regarding precocious puberty among community women.

Assumption

Women residing in the selected community may have some knowledge regarding precocious puberty.

Methodology

A quantitative research approach and descriptive survey design were used for the study. The research was conducted in PSMS Kalkaji, New Delhi. A total of 100 women were selected using convenience sampling technique.

Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire developed by the investigators. The questionnaire included items related to meaning, causes, signs and symptoms, complications, prevention, and management of precocious puberty. Consent was obtained from participants before data collection.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, median, and mode were used to analyze the data. After completion of data collection, informational pamphlets regarding precocious puberty were distributed among participants.

Results

Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Among the 100 participants, the majority (57%) belonged to the age group of 25–35 years, while 22% were between 18–25 years of age. More than half of the participants (52%) had education up to matric level, whereas 13% were illiterate. Nearly half of the women (47%) were daily wage workers and 33% were homemakers.

Most participants (85%) had a monthly family income below ₹10,000. All participants belonged to urban areas. The majority were married (94%) and lived in joint families (64%). Only 6% of participants reported prior knowledge regarding precocious puberty.

Section B: Knowledge Regarding Precocious Puberty

The study findings revealed that 58% of women had average knowledge regarding precocious puberty, whereas 24% had good knowledge and 18% demonstrated poor knowledge.

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The findings indicate that the majority of participants possessed only moderate knowledge regarding precocious puberty.

Section C: Knowledge Scores

The mean knowledge score was 6.5, while the median and mode were 8 and 7 respectively.

Discussion

The present study assessed knowledge regarding precocious puberty among women residing in a selected community of New Delhi. The findings revealed that the majority of participants had average knowledge, whereas only a small proportion demonstrated good knowledge regarding the condition.

Similar findings have been reported in previous studies conducted in different settings, where inadequate awareness regarding precocious puberty was observed among community populations. Limited understanding regarding the signs, causes, and consequences of early puberty may lead to delayed healthcare-seeking behavior and late diagnosis.

Increasing urbanization, lifestyle modifications, environmental exposure, and nutritional changes have been identified as factors associated with the growing incidence of precocious puberty. Therefore, awareness programmes focusing on early identification and timely management are essential for promoting child health and preventing complications associated with early pubertal development.

Educational interventions such as pamphlets, counseling sessions, and community awareness campaigns may help improve knowledge among women and caregivers regarding precocious puberty.

Table 1.Socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants

n=100

S.No	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1. Age (in years)			
A	18-25	22	22%
B	25-35	57	57%
C	36-45	18	18%
D	Over 45	3	3%
2. Educational level			
A	Illiterate	13	13%
B	Matric	52	52%
C	12^{th}passed	26	26%
D	Graduated and others	9	9%
3. Occupation			
A	Home Maker	33	33%
B	Daily Wager	47	47%
C	Private sector	19	19%
D	Public sector	1	1%
4. Family income			
A	Lessthan10,000	85	85%
B	10,001-20,000	13	13%
C	20,001-30,000	2	2%
D	Morethan30,000	0	0%
5. Area of residence			
A	Rural	0	0%
B	Urban	100	100%

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6. Marital status			
A	Single	0	0%
B	Married	94	94%
C	Divorced	5	5%
D	Widow	1	1%
7. Type of family			
A	Joint	64	64%
B	Nuclear	36	36%
8. Numbers of children in family			
A	1	2	2%
B	2	18	18%
C	3	21	21%
D	4 and more than 4	59	59%
9. Number of female child in family			
A	1	17	17%
B	2	76	76%
C	3	43	43%
D	4 and more than 4	8	8%
10. Number of male child in family			
A	1	19	19%
B	2	62	62%
C	3	12	12%
D	4 and more than 4	1	1%
11. Do you have any knowledge about Precautious puberty			
A	Yes	6	6%
B	No	94	94%
12. If yes, source of information			
A	Family	0	0%
B	Friends	2	2%
C	Social media	1	1%
D	Any other	3	3%

Table 2.Distribution of Participants According to Knowledge Level Regarding Precocious Puberty (N=100)

Level of Knowledge	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Good	1–4	24	24%
Average	5–8	58	58%
Poor	9–12	18	18%

Table 3.Description of Knowledge Scores Regarding Precocious Puberty

Possible Knowledge Score	Mean	Median	Mode
0–12	6.5	8	7

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Conclusion

The study concluded that most women residing in the selected community had average knowledge regarding precocious puberty. Limited awareness among community women highlights the need for health education programmes and awareness initiatives related to early pubertal changes in children.

Providing educational information through pamphlets and community-based teaching programmes can improve understanding and promote early medical consultation. Early diagnosis and management are important to minimize the physical, psychological, and social consequences associated with precocious puberty.

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