

Effect of Positive Parenting Programme on Stress among Parents of Children with Autism

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Abstract: Background: Among all developmental disabilities of children, autism spectrum disorder is a devastating disorder with high prevalence in different countries all over the world. Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder report significantly higher stress than parents of children with other disorders. Aim & Objectives: The present study was aimed to assess the effect of positive parenting programme on stress among parents of children with autism. The objectives were to assess the level of stress among parents of children with autism, to determine the effect of positive parenting programme on the level of stress among parents of children with autism and to find out the association between pre-test level of stress among parents of children with autism and selected demographic variables. Methods: Quantitative approach. A one group pre- test post- test pre-experimental, design was used for study. Convenience sampling technique was used for selection of sample. 60 parents of children with autism were selected for the study. The tools of the study were demographic data sheet and Parenting stress index-short form Richard Abidin (1995). Results: The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Paired 't' test computed between the pre and post-test level of stress scores showed that the p- value ($p < 0.000$) is less than 0.05 level of significance. Conclusion: The study concluded that the positive parenting programme was effective in reducing stress among parents of children with autism. Chi-square test showed that there was no significant association between the pre-test level of stress among parents of children with autism and selected demographic variables except type of family.

Keywords: Effect; Positive Parenting Programme; Stress; Parents; Children with autism

1. Introduction

“Parents job is to prepare the child for the world, but parents of autistic child’s job is to prepare the world for the child” –by Stuart Duncan

Back ground of the problem

Children are the precious gift of God in a family and without them a family is not complete. When a child is diagnosed with a physical disability or a developmental disability parents often thrust into an outbreak of emotions.

Autism is a developmental brain disorder characterized by impaired social interaction and communication skills and by a limited range of activities and interests and it is the most characteristic and best-studied pervasive developmental disorder.¹

The exact cause of autism is unknown. A combination of autism risk genes and environmental factors are influencing early brain development. The optimal treatment of autism involves an educational or vocational program that is suited to the developmental level of the child or adult, respectively.²

Autism affects 1 out of every 68 to 100 children according to estimates from CDC’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Autism affects individuals irrespective of socio economic status, religion or race. There are about 10 million people in India with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD is almost 5 times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189). But autistic girls will tend to have more severe symptoms and greater cognitive impairment. The disorder becomes apparent in children generally by the age of 3 years.³

Parents of autistic child have an important role not only in the early recognition but also in the chronic management of these disorders. The primary goals of treatment are to maximize the child’s ultimate functional independence and quality of life by minimizing the core autism spectrum disorder features facilitating development and learning, promoting socialization, reducing maladaptive behaviors, and educating.⁴

2. Need and Significance of the study

Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in our nation. Autism is rising alarmingly in India. The number of children diagnosed with autism has increased significantly over the last few decades. Prior to the 2009 revision, the autism prevalence rate was at one in 150 children. Raising a child with autism is one of the hardest things a parent will ever have to do. It is an overwhelming challenge physically and emotionally adding anxiety on the person caring for the child. Rearing a child with autism often contributes to marital problems, problems with other children, and job instability. Although there is nothing that we can do to change the origin of the problem, there are strategies which family members can do to reduce the level of abnormal behaviour and increase the child’s ability to cope.⁵

Autism Spectrum Disorder results in a significant life-long impairment in social and language functioning for the children and significant distress for the care givers. Research indicates that parents of children with autism experience greater stress than parents of children with learning disabilities.⁵

Parents play a vital role in the all round development of their children. An analysis of existing studies looking at the influence of parenting on children with special needs, found that when parents employed positive parenting, their kids

exhibited greater independence, better language skills, stronger emotional expression and social interaction as well as improved temperament.⁶

As autism is a lifelong condition and families need time to adjust to this difficult situation, a nurse can help in facilitating this adjustment by providing positive parenting programme which can make them comfortable in adjusting with their challenged children.⁷

Statement of the problem

A study to assess the effect of positive parenting programme on stress among parents of children with autism attending selected special schools in Ernakulam district, Kerala.

Objectives

- 1) Assess the level of stress among parents of children with Autism.
- 2) Determine the effect of positive parenting programme on level of stress among parents of children with Autism.
- 3) Find the association between pre-test level of stress among parents of children with autism and selected demographic variables.

3. Methodology

Approach and design:

Quantitative approach. A one group pre- test post- test (Pre experimental) design was used for the study.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling technique was used for selection of sample.

Sample Size

60 parents of children with autism were selected as per availability and fulfillment of inclusion criteria

Setting

Selected special schools

Description of the tool

The tool consisted of demographic data sheet and Parenting stress index-short form Richard Abidin (1995).

Tool 1: Demographic data sheet

It consisted of 16 items such as age of the father , age of the mother, gender of the parent present for the study, type of family, number of children, number of children having autism, age of the child, age of father at the time of child's birth, age of mother at the time of giving birth to the child, education of the father, education of the mother, occupation of the father, occupation of the mother, residence, monthly income in rupees, any complications during antenatal, intranatal and postnatal period.

Tool 2: Parenting stress index-short form Richard Abidin (1995).

Description of the intervention

Positive parenting programme consisted of three hours of teaching schedule which was provided using relevant audio visual aids. This includes 4 sessions with a duration of 45 minutes each, covering developmental, emotional and behavioral problems faced by children with autism and measures to develop strong, nurturing relationship and effective communication to reduce stress among parents of children with autism.

- 1st Session :Individual interactive session
- 2nd Session: The meaning, causes and symptoms of autism
- 3rd Session: Management of children with autism
- 4thSession:Positive parenting techniques.

Data collection

Day one, pre-test was conducted by using demographic data sheet and Parenting stress index-short form Richard Abidin. The positive parenting programme was given on the same day. The post-test was conducted on the 7th day using the same tool.

Data analysis

The testing of research hypothesis using these data includes descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis, frequency and percentage distribution for demographic variables. Paired t'-test was used to determine the effect of positive parenting programme on level of stress and Chi square test was used to find the association between pre-test level of stress scores and selected demographic variable.

4. Analysis and Interpretation

Level of stress among parents of children with Autism

The level of stress was categorized as low level, normal level, high level and clinically significant.

Table 1: Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of level of stress among parents of children with autism, (n=60)

Level of stress	Score range	f	%	Mean	SD
Pre-test					
Low level of stress	< 55	00	00	101.61	16.87
Normal level of stress	56-85	09	15		
High level of stress	86-90	07	11.7		
Clinically significant stress	>90	44	73.3		
Post-test					
Low level of stress	< 55	08	13.3	71.06	13.70
Normal level of stress	56-85	42	70		
High level of stress	86-90	04	6.67		
Clinically significant stress	>90	06	10.0		

Table 1 shows that in pre-test majority (73.3%) of the parents of children with autism had clinically significant stress before positive parenting programme and in post- test majority (70%) of the samples had normal level of stress after positive parenting programme.

Table 2: Paired 't' test computed between pre-test and post-test level of stress among parents of children with Autism, (n=60)

Stress	Mean	SD	Mean difference	't' Value	df	p-value
Pretest	101.61	15.60	30.55	15.16	59	0.000
Post test	71.06					

0.001 level of significance.

Table 2 shows that $p < 0.05$ level of significance. There was significant difference in the mean pre-test and post-test stress score of parents of children with autism. This shows that the Positive Parenting Programme was effective in reducing stress among parents of children with Autism.

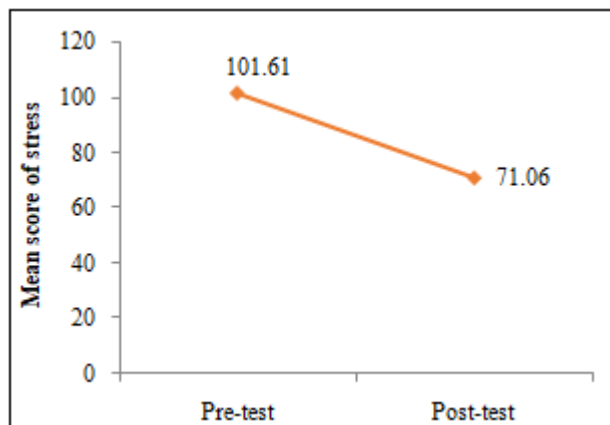


Figure 1: The mean scores of pre and post -test level of stress among parents of children with autism

5. Results

The major findings of the study were:

Section 1: Description of the demographic variables

- Majority of the parents, fathers (61.7%) and Mothers (46.7%) were within the age group of 36-45 years.
- Most (81.7%) of the parents present for the study were mothers.
- Majority (78.3%) of the parents belong to nuclear family.
- Most (98.3%) of the parents had one child with autism and 1.7% have two children with autism.
- 35% of the parents had children between the age group of 10-12 years.
- 45% of the fathers were within the age group of 31-35 years at the time of child's birth to the child with autism
- 43.3 % of mothers were within the age group of 26- 30 years at the time of giving birth to the child with autism
- Majority of the fathers and mothers were graduates
- 50% of the fathers were professional and majority of the mothers 73.3% were home makers.
- Majority of the parents had monthly income of more than Rs.20,000/ month .
- 58.3% of mothers had no complications during antenatal, intranatal and postnatal period.

Section II: Effect of Positive Parenting Programme on stress among Parents of children with Autism

The findings of the present study shows that the mean stress score of study subjects decreased from 101.61 to 71.06 with

standard deviation 16.87 to 13.70. It shows that there was a reduction in the level of stress after positive parenting programme. Thus the study reveals that the Positive Parenting Programme was effective in reducing stress among the parents of children with Autism.

6. Conclusion

The present study was conducted to assess the effect of positive parenting programme on stress among parents of children with autism attending selected special schools in Ernakulum district. The following conclusions were made after the analysis of the data obtained. Parents of children with autism had clinically significant stress and the study had brought out the fact that there was significant reduction in the level of stress after positive parenting programme. Present study did not find any significant association between pre-test level of stress scores and selected demographic variables except the type of family.

Findings of the present study suggest that positive parenting programme can be used as an effective programme to reduce the stress among parents of children with autism. Positive parenting programme can help the nurse to provide a multifaceted participatory care in reducing stress among parents of children with autism. Finally, positive parenting programme may be an innovative option to assist in promoting coping and reducing stress for the parents of children with autism in other setting.

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