

Assessment of Primary School Teachers' Knowledge Towards Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Pupils In Mosul City

Nawaf Mohammed Dahir^{1*}, and Saja Hashem Mohammed².

¹Ph.D /Instructor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Babylon, Iraq,

²Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Babylon, Iraq.

Abstract

Background: Teachers' knowledge towards childhood mental health disorders at schools located in regions which were exposed to armed conflict, traumatic events and wars should be given the highest priority, not only for pupils' mental health, but also as an important perspective for education. Therefore, teachers' knowledge must be adequately assessed about common childhood mental health disorders, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Objectives: The study aimed to assess teachers' knowledge towards post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among pupils at primary schools in Mosul city.

Materials and Method: A descriptive study was conducted for the period from 1st December 2018 to 30th May 2019. The study included (520) primary schools inside Mosul which is the second largest city in Iraq. A probability sampling (simple random technique) was used, the sample consisted of (60) teachers who were teaching in primary schools inside Mosul city. Data were collected through the utilization of constructed questionnaire after validity and reliability of it were estimated. Reliability of the questionnaire was estimated through a pilot study and the validity was determined through (15) experts related to the field of study. All data were collected by means of interview technique. Data were analyzed through use of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis procedures using SPSS Version-23.

Results: The findings of current study indicates that the level of teachers' knowledge towards post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was low.

Conclusion: The study concludes that there is a considerable lack in teachers' knowledge in regard to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Keywords: *Assessment, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Teachers' Knowledge.*

Introduction

Teachers have an important role in supporting pupils when they feel fear, anxiety and/or sadness as well as in referral these pupils to mental health professionals and facilities. Pupils, especially those at schools located in regions which were witnessed armed conflict, traumatic events and wars, are more susceptible to experience psychological distress symptoms than others. In order to enhance teachers' roles, their knowledge about common childhood mental health disorders should be assessed effectively, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as one of the common mental health

disorders among pupils in Mosul city ^[1]. In Iraq, Mosul city witnessed a numbers of wars and conflicts since 2005. The last conflict was triggered by the invasion of the criminal (ISIS) gangs in the beginning of 2014. As a result, the experience of war and violence increases the risk for emotional disturbing and development of psychiatric disorders among individuals. It is obvious that traumatic experiences affect people, especially children, in different ways. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a disorder that some people experience after living through a stressful and traumatic events. Traumatic events may include combat, severe accidents, or physical assault ^[2, 3]. Childhood trauma can have a direct and considerable impacts on the ability of a pupil

to learn. Yet, this issue has largely been neglected by our education system¹³. Adopting a trauma-informed approach, could enable schools to conduct a model shift at the teachers and other staff to recognize, make referral, understand and address mental health and learning needs of traumatized pupils. This requires a commitment to shaping school practices and policies to be sensitive to the needs of traumatized learners. This effort positively affects schools and changes the life-track of vulnerable pupils¹⁴. Poor emotional and mental health impacts a considerable number of children and young people¹⁵. Teachers are in a unique position to identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties after stressful events due to their prolonged and closed contact with pupils¹⁶. Following a traumatic event, children may respond in different range of responses, so it isn't obviously what types of reactions they will show. Therefore, building strategies to help teachers in winding up additional more attuned for identifying the symptoms of emotional and behavioral difficulties in their pupils following a stressful events is very necessary^{17, 81}.

Objectives: The study aimed to assess teachers' knowledge regarding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among pupils at primary schools in Mosul city.

Methodology

A descriptive design using the assessment approach was conducted for the period from 1st December 2018 to 30th May 2019 to assess the teachers' knowledge toward post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among pupils at primary schools in Mosul city. A probability sampling (simple random technique) was used. A sample of (60) primary schools were selected after dividing the city into two sides (Right and left side of the Tigris River), then selected (30) schools from each side and then one teacher was selected from each school in a probable manner. The teachers were participated voluntarily in the

study. The data were collected through using a special questionnaire after the validity and reliability of it were estimated. The content validity of the questionnaire was estimated through a panel of experts related to the study field, and its reliability was estimated through a pilot study which included (10) teachers who were excluded from the final sample. The reliability of study instrument was determined by using test-retest technique, the alpha correlation coefficient (r) was =0.82. The questionnaire was constructed by the researchers after reviewing many related literatures, it is composed of two main parts: **Part-I:** Teachers' socio-demographical data such as (age, gender, marital status, years of employment, and educational level). **Part-II:** This part is concerned with multiple choice questions (MCQs) to assess teachers' post-traumatic stress related knowledge which included six sections as follow:

1- Section one: Eight (MCQs) about concept of health and childhood mental health.

2- Section two: Eight (MCQs) about the psychological trauma.

3- Section three: Eight (MCQs) about the impacts of psychological trauma.

4- Section four: Eight (MCQs) about Post-traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms.

5- Section five: Eight (MCQs) about DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD.

6- Section six: Eight (MCQs) about protection and resilience factors.

Cut of points for scores for each section: Extremely Low= (0-1), low= (2-3), Intermediate= (4-5), Good= (6-8). Cut of points for scores for total knowledge: Extremely Low= (0-12), low= (13-24), Intermediate= (25-36), Good= (37-48).

Results

Table (1): Socio-demographical Characteristics of Study Subjects (n=60):

Demographical Characteristics	Groups	Sample (n = 60)	
		F	%
Age	30-40 years	32	53.4
	41-50 years	17	28.3
	51-60 years	11	18.3
	Mean (SD)	42.40 (7.66)	

Cont... Table (1): Socio-demographical Characteristics of Study Subjects (n=60):

Gender	Male	31	51.7
	Female	29	48.3
Marital Status	Single	9	15.0
	Married	39	65.0
	Widowed	8	13.3
	Divorced	4	6.7
Years of Employment	1-5 years	7	11.7
	6-10 years	12	20.0
	11-15 years	21	35.0
	16-20 years	4	6.7
	≤ 21 years	16	26.7
Educational Level	Preparative	18	30.0
	Institute	23	38.3
	University	19	31.7

N: Number, F: Frequency, %: Percent, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation.

This table indicates that all participants of the study are (60) teachers. Their ages are between (30-60) years old. The overall mean age for the participants is [42.40 (SD=7.66)]. The table also reveals that the highest percentage of the sample (53.4%) are in the age group of (30-40) years old, while the lowest percentage of them (18.3%) are at the age group of (51-60) years old. The table also shows that about (51.7%) of the sample are

male. On the other hand, the majority of teachers (65%) are married. Regarding teacher’s work experience, the table indicates that (35%; n=21) of the sample are having years of employment ranged between (11-15) years. Finally, the table demonstrates that about (38.3%) of sample are possess an institute degree certificate and approximately (31.7%) are having university degree certificate.

Table(2): Distribution of Study Subjects among Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Related Knowledge Sections according to their Levels of Knowledge:

Knowledge Sections	Levels of Knowledge									
	Extremely Low		Low		Intermediate		Good		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Section One	1	1.7	29	48.3	28	46.7	2	3.3	60	100
Section Two	4	6.7	34	56.7	21	35.0	1	1.7	60	100
Section Three	3	5.0	39	65.0	17	28.3	1	1.7	60	100
Section Four	5	8.3	38	63.3	16	26.7	1	1.7	60	100
Section Five	6	10.0	29	48.3	24	40.0	1	1.7	60	100
Section Six	2	3.3	30	50.0	27	45.0	1	1.7	60	100
Total Knowledge	3	5.0	52	86.7	5	8.3	0	00	60	100

F: Frequency, %: Percent.

This table indicates that the highest percentage of teachers are having low levels of post-traumatic stress disorder related knowledge scores in all sections; section one (F= 48.3%; n= 29); section two (F= 56.7%; n= 34); section three (F= 65%; n= 39); section four (F= 63.3%; n= 38); section five (F= 48.3; n= 29); section six (F=50%; n= 30). Concerning the levels of the total knowledge scores, this table shows that the highest percentage of teachers are having low level of knowledge (F= 86.7%; n= 52).

Discussion

The limitation that the researchers faced was that there was no related literature and previous studies about such assessment regarding post-traumatic stress disorder among pupils. This study objected to assess teachers' knowledge in respect to childhood post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at primary schools.

Data analysis revealed that (51.7%) of the sample are male, table (1). Relative to age, the study showed that the highest percentage of the sample (53.4%) are in the age group of (30-40) years old, the overall mean age for the participants is 42.40 (SD=7.66), table [1]. Regarding years of employment, the findings indicated that (35%; n=21) of the sample are having years of employment ranged between (11-15).

In the other hand, the study illustrated that the majority of teachers (65%) are married. Finally, the results demonstrated that about (38.3%) of sample are possess an institute degree certificate and approximately (31.7%) are having bachelor's degree certificate, table (1).

These results are relatively in agreement with the findings of a previous study done by Al-kraawi (2018). Al-kraawi was applied an education program on primary school teachers regarding their knowledge about Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder among pupils at primary schools in AL- Najaf city. Al-kraawi assessed teachers' knowledge toward Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder among pupils at primary schools. In his mentioned study, Al-kraawi proved that there is a significant lack in teachers' knowledge towards such common childhood mental health disorder among pupils.

This current study also illustrated that the highest percentage of teachers are having low levels of PTSD related knowledge in all sections, table (2); section one (F= 48.3%; n= 29); section two (F= 56.7%; n=

34); section three (F= 65%; n= 39); section four (F= 63.3%; n= 38); section five (F= 48.3; n= 29); section six (F=50%; n= 30).

Finally, table (2) showed that the total knowledge scores of all post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) sections is low among (86.7%) of teachers who participated in the study. Therefore, as results mentioned above, we can say that there is a significant lack in teachers' knowledge towards childhood post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Conclusions

The study concluded that there is a significant lack in teachers' knowledge in regard to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Financial Disclosure: There is no financial disclosure.

Conflict of Interest: None to declare.

Ethical Clearance: All experimental protocols were approved under the Faculty of Nursing, University of Babylon, Iraq and all experiments were carried out in accordance with approved guidelines.

References

1. Child Mind Institute. Children's' Mental Health Report. 2015.
2. Public Health England. The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment. London: Public Health England. 2014.
3. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association Press. 2013.
4. McInerney M, McKlindon A. Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools. Education Law Centre. 2013; 1-2.
5. Department for Education. Mental health and behavior in schools departmental advice for school staff. London: Department for Education. 2014.
6. Kenardy J, De Young A, Le Brocque R, MARCH R. Childhood Trauma Reaction: Teacher Manual. CONROD, University of Queensland. 2011; 2-12.
7. Psychology Today. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. 2016.

8. Public Health England. The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment. London: Public Health England. 2014.
9. Al-kraawi MH. Effectiveness of an education Program on primary school Teachers' Knowledge about Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder among pupils in AL- Najaf city, Unpublished dissertation, Faculty of nursing, University of Babylon. 2018; 85.