

## ASSESS THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING SOMATOFORM DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

*Somatoform disorders are recognised by physical symptoms suggestive of a medical condition that are neither medically explained nor by direct effect of a substance. Since this kind of disorders is common among children, teachers are the one who could discover it at first and find a remedy.*

*The present study was focussed to identify the level of knowledge of primary school teachers regarding Somatoform disorder in children. Research design used for the present study was non-experimental descriptive research design. After obtaining a formal permission from the concerned authority and teachers, 30 teachers were selected from Sacred Heart School and Holy Family School in Thrissur, Kerala. Sampling method adopted for the present study was based on non-probability convenient sampling technique. Conceptual framework was adopted. A Pilot study was conducted to assess the feasibility among 5 primary school teachers of NSS Primary School, Pullazhi, Thrissur district. Socio demographic characteristics of samples were assessed by using socio-demographic performer containing variables. Data was collected by using self-structured questionnaire and the collected data was categorised and analysed based on study objectives and the hypothesis was derived by using descriptive and inferential statistics with the application of EXCEL version. The study results reveal that 100% were females, 46.66% had less than 5 years of experience, 40% were of 25 - 30 years of age, 70% had post-graduation degrees, 100% belongs to private school, 66.66% are married and 70% have average knowledge of somatoform disorders. There is no significant association between the levels of knowledge of primary school teachers and their selected socio demographic variables.*

**Key Words:** Knowledge, Somatoform disorder, School teachers, Children.

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## INTRODUCTION

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see..."The developmental differences between adults and children lead to different presentations. Hence, the adult literature is of limited usefulness in assessment and management of a paediatric population. Studies in childhood population are sparse and those evaluating somatoform disorders as a group are even lesser. Somatoform disorders are subjective reports of physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, or muscle pain which are either disproportionate or inconsistent with history, physical examination, laboratory, and other investigative findings. This group of disorders can be manifested with wide range of severity, ranging from mild self-limited symptoms, such as stomach ache and headache, to chronic disabling symptoms, such as seizures and paralysis.

Children are considered a nation's primary asset. Their health is the responsibility of the society which includes family and school. Somatoform disorders will threaten normal growth and development of children. While reviewing various literatures, researchers identified the importance of school and teachers in diagnosing and managing somatoform disorders. Hence, the researchers would like to assess primary school teacher's knowledge on somatoform disorder among children.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

'A study to assess the level of knowledge regarding somatoform disorders in children among primary school teachers in selected schools at Thrissur, Kerala.'

## OBJECTIVES

- Assess the level of knowledge regarding somatoform disorders in children among primary school teachers.
- Find out association between the level of knowledge regarding somatoform disorders among teachers with their selected demographic variables

## ASSUMPTIONS

- ✓ There is low level of knowledge regarding somatoform disorders in children among primary school teachers.
- ✓ There is no significant association between the level of knowledge regarding somatoform disorder among primary school teachers and their selected socio-demographic variables.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

- 1) Self-structured questionnaire to assess the socio demographic variable.
- 2) Self-structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge score of primary school teachers.

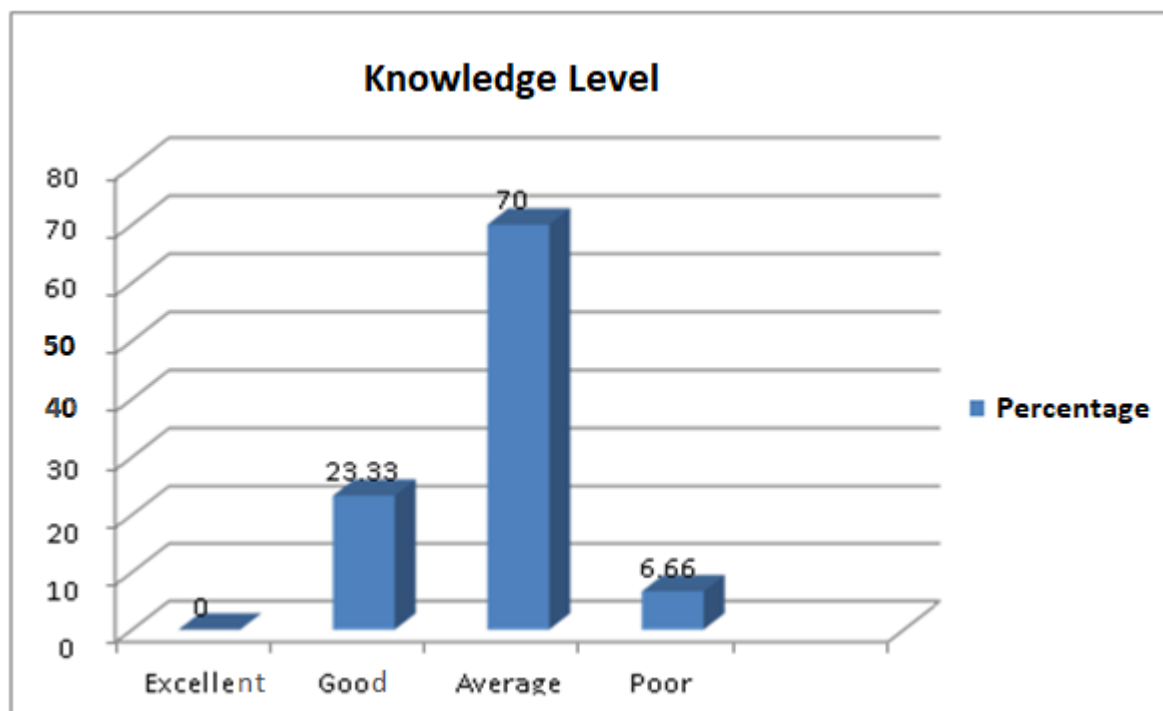
**Descriptive statistics:** Frequency and percentage distribution to describe the demographic variables and the level of knowledge regarding somatoform disorders in children among primary school teachers.

**Inferential statistics:** Chi-square to find the association between the levels of knowledge of teachers regarding somatoform disorders with their selected demographic variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study results reveal that 100% belongs to female gender, 46.66% had less than 5 years of experience, 40% were of 25 - 30 years of age, 70% had post-graduation degrees, 100% belongs to private school, 66.66% are married, and 70% have average knowledge on somatoform disorders. There is no significant association between the level of knowledge of primary school teachers and their selected socio-demographic variables.

Figure - 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge level on Somatoform disorder in children among primary school teachers



Bar diagram (Fig. - 1) shows 0% of primary school teachers have excellent knowledge. 23.33% have good knowledge, 70% have average knowledge, and 6.66% have poor knowledge.

Table – 2: Association of knowledge on Somatoform disorders in children among primary school teachers with their selected demographic variables.

Variables		Total Samples	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Chi-square value	P-value	Result
Age	25 - 30	12	0	3	8	1	4.04	0.671	No significant association
	30 - 40	7	0	3	4	0			
	> 40	11	0	1	9	1			
Gender	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	No significant association
	Female	30	0	7	21	2			
	Other	0	0	0	0	0			
Marital Status	Married	20	0	4	15	1	3.4	0,757	No significant association
	Unmarried	10	0	3	6	1			
	Divorced	0	0	0	0	0			
Educational Qualification	Bachelors	5	0	1	3	1	3.93	0.686	No significant association
	Postgraduates	21	0	4	16	1			
	Others	4	0	2	2	0			
Years of experience	< 5	14	0	5	8	1	3.07	0.800	No significant association
	5 - 10	4	0	1	3	0			
	> 10	12	0	1	10	1			

In the present study there is no association found between the level of knowledge of primary school teachers regarding somatoform disorders in children and their socio demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, previous experience, and educational qualification.

#### LIMITATIONS

- The study was confined to a small group of 30 primary school teachers which limits generalisation.

- The study was limited to only primary school teachers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A longitudinal study can be conducted to identify the long term impacts of the variable.
- A similar study can be replicated on a larger sample for better generalisation.
- A study can be conducted to assess the practice of teachers with regard to teaching children with somatoform disorder.
- A similar study can be conducted in a different setting.
- A comparative study can be conducted between urban and rural areas.
- A longitudinal study can be conducted to assess the prevalence and risk factors contributing to somatoform disorder.
- An epidemiological study can be conducted to assess the incidence and prevalence of Somatoform disorder.

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