



Teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward epilepsy

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Primary school teacher's knowledge and attitudes toward children with epilepsy



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EPILEPSY & SCHOOL

- Epilepsy has higher incidence during the school years
- Critical period of the child's social, psychological, and physical development
- Significantly impact the child's quality of life and future adult roles
- Increased risk of educational underachievement, learning difficulties
- Mental health problems, social isolation, and poor self-esteem

Sillanpaa et al. Epilepsia 2015;56(11):1774-83

EPILEPSY & TEACHERS

- Teacher's knowledge and attitudes can have significant impact
- Influence student's performance, social skill development, and future employment
- Many international studies
- Teachers often have insufficient knowledge, inadequate training, and misconceptions about epilepsy and its management

Dumeier et al. Arch Dis Child 2015;100(9):851-5

OBJECTIVES

- Study primary school teacher's attitudes toward epilepsy.
- Identify areas in which further teacher training and education are required.
- Identify contributing factors to inadequate knowledge and negative attitudes.

HYPOTHESIS

- Many teachers are not well informed about epilepsy
- Some are misinformed from unreliable sources
- Contributes to their negative attitudes toward the students

METHODS

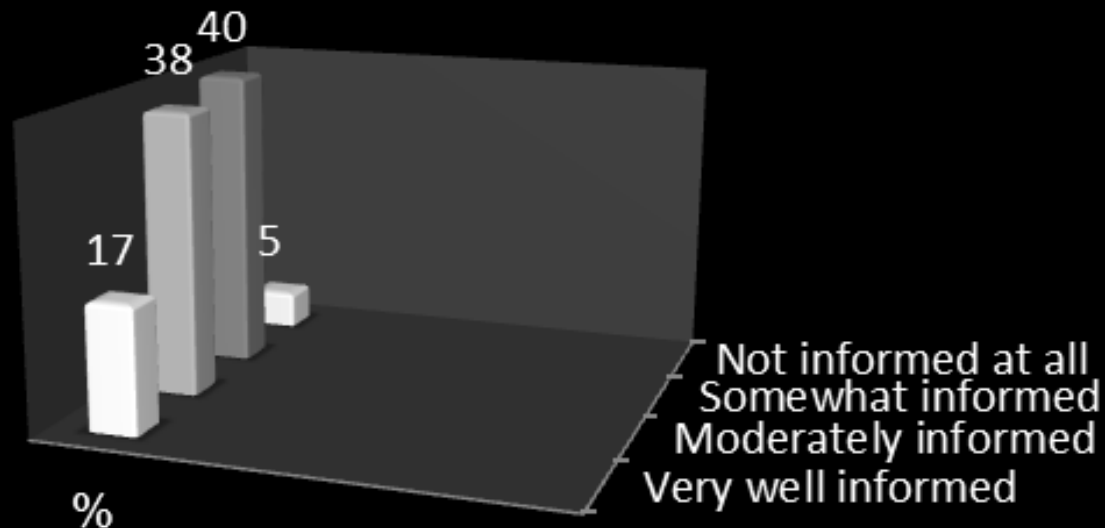
- Stratified random sample survey
- Primary school teachers in Jeddah
- Private/public schools - male/female students
- Four regions (north, center, south W, south E)
- Structured 37-item questionnaire
- Demographics, knowledge, attitudes, experience

RESULTS

- 620, public (58%) and private (42%) schools
- Ages 21-59 years (mean 36)
- 53% females
- 66% with university degree
- 1-35 years of experience (mean 13.5)

Likert scale item

Level of Teacher's Knowledge



Teacher's knowledge

Epilepsy is a life time disorder	59%
One of the causes of epilepsy is spirit possession	27%
Intelligence of an epileptic child is below average	25%
Evil eye is a cause of epilepsy	22%
Epilepsy cannot be cured	21%

Teacher's Attitudes

Children with epilepsy have abnormal behavior in class	47%
They have future career limitations	42%
Children with epilepsy should be placed in a special class	28%
They should be placed in a special school	27%
I mind having a child with epilepsy in my classroom	25%
They should not participate in sport activities	18%

RESULTS

- Age, gender, years of experience, or type of school did not correlate with knowledge
- Teachers with higher education had better knowledge (57% vs 21%, $p=0.009$)
- Saudi teachers had better knowledge independent of their educational level (67% vs 52%, $p=0.013$)
- Saudi teachers were less likely to think that children with epilepsy have lower IQ ($p=0.002$), should be placed in a special class ($p=0.0001$), or should not participate in sports ($p=0.04$)

RESULTS

- Teacher's attitudes correlated highly with knowledge
- Those with good knowledge were less likely to mind having the child in their class ($p=0.028$) or think that they should be placed in a special classroom ($p=0.029$)
- Teachers working in private schools were more likely to mind having a child with epilepsy ($p=0.02$), think that they should be placed in a special class ($p=0.0001$)
- Those who encountered an epileptic child (28%) had better knowledge ($p=0.0001$)
- At the time, most (58%) did not know what to do

DISCUSSION

- A study from a different Saudi region found that possession was still believed to be a cause of epilepsy among 40% of university educated teachers (regional variations)
- Another Saudi study revealed that 14% of the public believed that epilepsy is infectious and 8% believed that epilepsy was a type of mental illness

Obeid et al. Seizure 2012;21:245-9
Alaqeel et al. Seizure 2013;22:205-9

DISCUSSION

- Many international studies
- Teachers have insufficient knowledge, inadequate training, erroneous acute management
- Taiwan, >30% thought epileptic seizures were associated with insanity
- Thailand, 38% had not heard of epilepsy
- Developed countries, most teachers do not feel confident about their knowledge

Hsieh L, et al. Epilepsia 2001;42:647–50

Kankirawatana P. Epilepsia 1999;40:497–501

DISCUSSION

- Teacher's attitudes correlated highly with their knowledge
- Those with better knowledge were less likely to have negative attitudes
- Documented by several authors from different countries
- Lack of first-aid knowledge
- Also negative attitudes toward marriage and employment

Mustapha AF, et al. Niger J Clin Pract 2013;16(1):12-8

DISCUSSION

- Studies have found an association with years of experience and female gender
- Turkish study found young teacher's age and male gender predictive of positive attitudes
- Saudi teachers had better knowledge and better attitudes, independent of their educational level
- Teachers in private schools were less tolerant
- Teachers with personal experience of epilepsy had greater knowledge

Aydemir N. Epilepsy Behav 2011;20(2):286-90

Brabcova D, et al. Seizure 2012;21(6):461-5

LIMITATIONS

- Sample may not be representative of all teachers limiting our ability to generalize
- Study sample is large and included public and private schools
- Representation of all ages, experiences, and equal gender contribution
- Only primary teachers (greater impact on psycho-social development)

CONCLUSIONS

- Primary school teacher's knowledge needs improvements
- Attitudes correlated with their knowledge
- Need focused education and training
- Epilepsy resources should be made accessible

Purple Day



A promotional poster for Purple Day. At the top left is a purple awareness ribbon. In the center is the logo for the Saudi Epilepsy Society (SES), featuring the letters "SES" in a stylized font with a brain and a heart, and the text "SAUDI EPILEPSY SOCIETY" below it. A purple banner across the middle contains the Arabic text "اليوم العالمي للصرع". At the bottom left is the logo for "hope" (Helping Our Patients Manage Epilepsy) with a silhouette of a person holding a heart. At the bottom right is the logo for "NOVARTIS PHARMACEUTICAL" with the text "Novartis Pharma Services AG" and "Novartis, 24 Avenue Kippeler, CH-1223 Yverdon, Switzerland" below it.