



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH IN HEALTH SCIENCE

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A Study to Assess the Knowledge regarding Worm Infestation among Mothers of Under-Five Children in a Selected Community Area

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Abstract:

The infestation of the worms is a frequent health issue among children under the age of five, especially in the settlements where the overall level of sanitation is low, and people do not know how to avoid the worms. The mothers have an important role of keeping the house clean and de-worming the children on time. The purpose of this study was to examine the level of knowledge about worm infestation among under-five children mothers living in a local community of a chosen area. Cross-sectional descriptive research design using a quantitative method was used. The sample size consisted of 100 mothers who were picked using convenience sampling. The structured questionnaire, which tested the level of knowledge about causes, symptoms, transmission, prevention and treatment of worm infestation, was used in collecting data. The results indicated that a moderate adequate knowledge was recorded among the 48 percent of mothers, inadequate knowledge was recorded in 30 percent of mothers, and only 22 percent of mothers had adequate knowledge. The paper identifies the necessity of conducting community-based health education to enhance maternal education and prevention measures to curb cases of worm infestation among young children.

Keywords: worm infestation, under five children, mothers

INTRODUCTION

Helminthic infection (worms infestation) is a widespread community health issue afflicting children in the developing world. Poor sanitation, unsafe drinking water, poor hygiene and neglect of knowledge on preventive measures all contribute to soil-borne helminthiasis in young children: roundworms, hookworms, whipworms. This is especially risky to children below the age of five years due to their weakened immune systems and high rates of contaminated soil and food.

Worm infestation is a cause of malnutrition, anemia, growth retardation, poor cognitive development and immunity among young children. Mothers are critical in the hygiene practices, food safety, and children were dewormed in proper time. The maternal knowledge on transmission, symptoms, prevention and treatment are necessary to reduce the burden of infection. This is why determining the level of knowledge of mothers of children under the age of five will help to identify the gaps and organize the effective community health education programs.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To determine the extent of awareness on the issue of worm infestation among mothers with children under the age of five years in a chosen community area.

METHODOLOGY

The research assumed a quantitative method with descriptive cross-sectional design to determine the knowledge about the infestation of worm in mothers with under-five children in a selected locality. The sample has mothers living in the community whose children were below five years of age. The participants were allocated 100 mothers chosen through a convenience sampling method according to their capacity and motivation to take part.

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

Mothers who give birth to children less than five years.

Mothers who were ready to take part in the research.

Exclusion Criteria:

Mothers that were unavailable at the time of data collection.

Mothers with severe illness.

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION:

Formal questionnaire comprising of:

Section A Demographic variables (age, education, occupation, income, number of children).

Section B Knowledge questionnaire on worm infestation caused, transmitted, symptoms of worms, methods of prevention, and hygiene practices, and treatment.

SCORING INTERPRETATION:

- Adequate Knowledge — 76–100% score
- Moderately Adequate Knowledge 51% to 75% Score.
- Inadequate Knowledge — $\leq 50\%$ score

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:

Local authorities were consulted and allowed to carry out the study. The purpose of the study was made known to the mothers in which an informed consent was gained. The data was gathered using face to face interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS:

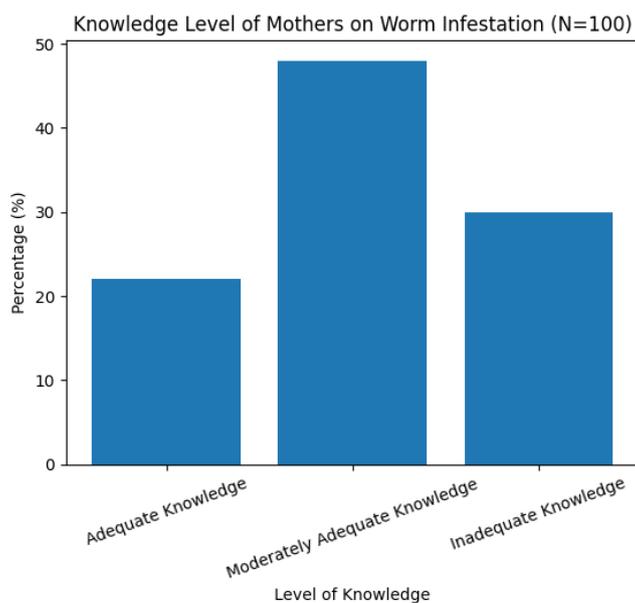
Descriptive statistics were applied to examine the data, to determine the frequency and percentage.

RESULTS

Table: The Knowledge Level of Mothers with Under-Five Children on Worm Infestation (N= 100)

S. No	Level of Knowledge	(n)	(%)
1	Adequate	22	22%
2	Moderately Adequate	48	48%
3	Inadequate	30	30%
	Total	100	100%

The results demonstrate that most mothers (48%), were moderately aware about worms infestation. Approximately one third had poor knowledge and only 22 percent had good knowledge. This means that health education programs should be introduced to enhance more awareness as pertains to prevention and management.



DISCUSSION

The research results showed that the large proportion of mothers had a moderate level of knowledge about worm infestation. Poor knowledge in hygiene practices, safe food handling and frequent deworming schedules are some of the reasons why young children have continued to be infected. These results have been made known in other community-based studies that have revealed similar results that maternal education would have significant impact on the health condition of children.

The rate of infection can be reduced by creating better awareness about handwashing, footwear that is used, proper sanitation and periodical deworming. The community health nurses and primary health workers are vital in terms of educating parents by visiting their homes, attending to their health status through health awareness campaigns and health camps.

CONCLUSION

The research established that a significant proportion of mothers had poor or at most poor knowledge on worms' infestation among the children under-five years. Health education campaigns and community programs based on awareness should be reinforced to address the practices of prevention and minimize the morbidity linked to infestation by the worms to young children.

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Cite this Article: R. Thamizselvi, Nishanathini Raman (2025). A Study to Assess the Knowledge regarding Worm Infestation among Mothers of Under-Five Children in a Selected Community Area, *International Journal of Innovative Research in Health Science*, 1(9), 7-10. <https://doi.org/10.63349/ijirhs.202452>