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Knowledge and attitudes toward child abuse and neglect among medical and dental undergraduate students and interns in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) is a major problem around the world including Saudi Arabia. According to National Family Safety Program Registry, most of cases of CAN in Saudi Arabia are detected in hospitals. Hence, healthcare professionals play an important role in identifying and reporting suspected cases of CAN. The purpose of the study is to assess knowledge and attitudes toward CAN among medical and dental Undergraduate (UG) students and interns in Riyadh. This cross-sectional study distributed a self-administrated structured questionnaire to 351 medical and dental UG students and interns in different public and private medical and dental colleges in Riyadh. Participants were recruited using convenient sampling. The data were entered using IBM SPSS version 22 software. Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution), Chi-square test, and t-test were used to perform the statistical analysis. The significance level (P value) was set at <0.05. About 57.5% of the participants reported having formal training on CAN during their UG study. Mean knowledge score related to CAN was 6.81 ± 1.17 for medical participants and 6.35 ± 1.35 for dental participants, and the difference was statistically significant ($P=0.001$). Majority of the participants believed that the main barrier for not reporting a suspected case of CAN is the fear of consequences (medical=82.4%, dental=68.5%, $P=0.01$). About 77% of the participants agreed to the need for further training in dealing with suspected cases of CAN. This study showed that dental participants had relatively less knowledge about the clinical presentation of CAN than medical participants. Improvements in the educational system are still needed to raise awareness about this issue.

Inclusion of case scenarios and problem-based learning may help retain knowledge acquired during training. To increase awareness about the diagnosis and referral procedures, academic institutes should consider continuous educational courses and seminars.

Biography

Maha Alatyan, Doctor of Dental Medicine, graduated from King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2019. Currently, He is Pediatric dentistry resident in the Saudi Board of Pediatric Dentistry at National Guard Hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He did participate as an organizer in multiple dental conferences (IADR in London, AEEDC in Dubai) and Community projects. This study have been presented in different Saudi and non-Saudi conference, Including, 4th International Dental Conference, 1st Dental Student Research Meeting In King Saud University, UAE International Dental Conference and Arab Dental Exhibition and Published in the Imam Journal of Applied Science And 3rd place winner in poster presentation in the second research day at King saud Bin Abdulaziz university for Health Sciences.

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