

Behavioural Problems Army vs Civilian School Children

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Abstract

Prevalence of mental disorders among children has been reported to be 14 – 20 % in various studies. The prevalence of behavioural problems in India has been explored by different authors which shows a rise in prevalence rates from 9% in 1964 to 36.5% by 2001. The objectives of the study were to assess behavioral problems of army and civilian school children, to compare behavioral problems and to determine relationship between behavioral problems with selected demographic variables. This study was carried out on 100 children from army and civilian school (50 from each school). Findings revealed that behavioural problems were more among army school children as compared to civilian school children. Thus, concluded that there is a need to guide the teachers and parents on management of behavioural problems in children.

Keywords: Behavioural problems; Army school children; Civilian school children.

Background

Prevalence of mental disorders among children has been reported to be 14 – 20 % in various studies. According to WHO report

(2000)[13], 20 % of children and adolescents suffer from a disabling mental illness worldwide. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS') 1999 report, *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*, estimates that at least one in five (20%) children and adolescents has a mental health disorder at some point in their life from childhood to adolescence. At least one in 10 (10%), or about 6 million people, had a serious emotional disturbance at some point in their life. The prevalence of behavioural problems in India has been explored by different authors which shows a rise in prevalence rates from 9% in 1964 to 36.5% by 2001.

According to the American Association of Family Physicians, normal or "good" child behaviors are behaviors that are developmentally appropriate based on social and cultural standards. A child's behaviour may be a problem if it doesn't match the expectations of the family or if it is disruptive. Every child is different. Children's normal behaviour depends on various natural and environmental circumstances in which a child grows and observes the way for his best possible conduct within his reach and interact amongst those who respond his gestures and body talks. The behavioural problems thus can be defined as deviation from the accepted norms of behaviour on the part of the child when he/she is exposed to inconsistent social and cultural environment. An appropriate

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degree of control over behaviour is a necessary development for a child to function in a family, in school, and with peers. Tirkey (2002) conducted an epidemiological study on prevalence of childhood behaviour problems in primary school children of Kanke. Out of 113, 34 (51.5%) male children and out of 81, 32 (48.5%) female children were rated as having behavioural problems by the class teacher on CBCL-TRF scale.

The influence of school on the personality development of the child is great because the school becomes a substitute for the home and the teacher becomes a substitute for the mother. It is important for the teacher to understand the factors which could be responsible for the observable behavioural problems of their student's behaviour or else she might deal with such students in a way which might aggravate the result.

About 10% of children in early school years perform poorly and have difficulty in learning academic skills. Learning disability is suspected when there is unexpected underachievement in adequate educational settings. Activity related problems like Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most frequently diagnosed childhood disorders, affecting approximately 5% of school-aged children (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).[4] Conduct disorder is more common in boys than girls.[5] Studies indicating that the rate among boys in the general population ranges from 6% to 10%, while the rate among girls ranges from 5% to 9%.

Defence services being a transferable job, serving personnel are required to move from one place to another frequently. This causes change of place, environment and school. Most of the time children are living with their mother, away from their father because of posting profile in defence services. This also affects a child's adjustment process, great anxiety and worry to them, which may predispose them to different kinds of behavioural problems. Chandra & Sadraluz (2009)[19] suggest that children of deployed service members face emotional and

behavioural challenges. Researchers found that across all age groups, children from military families reported significantly higher levels of emotional difficulties than children in the general population. The more time the parents are away, the more likely it is that children will experience problems.

As teachers are the people already loaded with heavy school work, a brief orientation programme or guidelines that help them to identify behavioural problems in a simpler way is one of the primary prevention strategies where the nurse acts as a health educator mastered in the field of child Psychiatric Nursing. This is not only to create awareness amongst teachers about behavioural problems in children but also to enable them to deal with these problems and play a new role of counsellor apart from teaching to the students. To the best of this investigator's knowledge, there are only few studies which deal with assessment of behaviour problems of army school children, and comparison of behavioral problems of army school children with those of civilian school children. It was hoped that this study would help to find out the magnitude of behavioural problems in army school children and civilian school children.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a comparative approach and non-experimental design for present study. The settings selected for the present study were Army Public school, Jalandhar Cantt. and Silver Oaks Public School, Jalandhar Cantt (Civilian school).

Total sample size was 100 children, 50 Army school children and 50 Civilian school children. Structured questionnaire was used to assess behavioural problems. Tool was validated by different experts from Psychiatry, Psychology, Paediatrics, and Research.

The tool has 2 parts: Part 1 was Demographic data sheet and Part 2 was questionnaire for assessment of behavioural problems.