

Original Research Article

# Knowledge of Mothers Regarding the Selection of Play Materials for Children in a Selected Hospital, Calicut

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## ABSTRACT

Effective play materials should be safe and suitable to the child's age, abilities, and interests. Many advertisements lead consumers to think that play materials are better if they are expensive, store-bought items. In reality, the best play materials are those selected based on their appropriateness for a child's age, development, and interests. A Descriptive study was carried out to assess the knowledge on selection of play materials for children among 60 mothers whose children are below the age of 7 and also to find the association of knowledge score with selected demographic variables. The subjects were selected through purposive sampling technique. Structured knowledge questionnaire was used to collect the data. The findings of the study revealed that 58% of the subjects had average knowledge, 42% had good knowledge and none had poor knowledge regarding the selection of play materials. The study concluded that most of the mothers had average knowledge regarding the selection of play materials for children.

**Key words:** Knowledge, play materials, mothers

## INTRODUCTION

Play is the mirror through which children experience their world and the world of others. All types of play have a significant role in children's development. With supportive adults, adequate play space, and an assortment of play materials, children stand the best chance of becoming healthy, happy, productive members of society.

A review of more than 40 studies found that play is significantly related to creative problem solving, co-operative behavior, logical thinking, IQ scores, and peer group popularity. Play enhances the progress of early development from 33% to 67% by increasing adjustment, improving language and reducing social and emotional problems. <sup>[1]</sup>

In addition to being purpose-built for children's play, play materials invite play and prolong play. Children will play longer when suitable play objects are available, and stand to gain the greatest benefits that play has to offer. According to research conducted in homes, the two most powerful factors related to cognitive development during infancy and the preschool years are the availability of play materials and the quality of the mother's involvement with the child. <sup>[2]</sup>

When selecting play materials, it is critical to consider the numerous safety issues specific to different developmental stages. Choking and falling are two concerns for infants and toddlers. Children love to move, and young children learning to control their bodies often fall or bump into things. Play material and other

classroom materials should not have sharp edges or projections. Infants and toddlers often explore their world by putting things in their mouths. Small buttons or pieces that come off easily are choking hazards and should be avoided. [3]

Choosing play material and activities that are suitable for children can challenge even the most experienced parent. By being mindful of the basic principles of child development and the role of play, parents can intentionally select play materials to meet young children's unique needs and interests, supporting learning. It is also important to be aware of the essential role of parent-child interactions. [4]

Mothers are child's first and best play mates. Not only do mothers have an important role in choosing good toys, but research shows that the most creative children are those who have had mothers involved in their play. The mother's role in play is as a responder and facilitator, not a director which many of parents are unaware. The parents should know about various forms of social behavior in play, sex role behavior in play and must have the abilities, experiences and interests in selection and care of play things.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive non experimental study was done to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding selection of play materials for children below the age of 7. The study was conducted in the Pediatric department of a selected tertiary care hospital at Calicut, Kerala. The average number of monthly inpatients in this area is 200 and outpatients 1200. The study sample consisted of sixty mothers whose children are below the age of seven. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the subjects. The instruments planned for this study were baseline proforma and Structured Knowledge Questionnaire on selection of play materials with 20 items to identify the level of knowledge. The structured knowledge questionnaire was divided into 3 areas such as importance and

type of play with 5 questions, play materials according to age with 8 questions and merits and demerits of play materials with 7 questions. To ensure content validity of the tool, it was submitted to 5 experts. Out of 20 items, 16 items met with 100% agreement and 4 had 80% agreement. The Content Validity Index (CVI) of the tool was 0.8. On the advice of experts some modification where made on the content aspects and in the wording of certain questions. The final questionnaire consisted of 20 questions. Correct response for each question carried one score and maximum score was 20.

The study was started after obtaining permission from the Institutional Ethical Committee and other authorities concerned. The data collection period was from 25/5/2017 to 31/5/2017. The investigators met the participants individually and explained the purpose of the study. Confidentiality was assured and informed consent was taken. The questionnaire was administered to the subjects and after entering the responses, they were returned to the investigator. Information leaflets on selection of play materials were then distributed to the subjects.

## RESULTS

The findings of the study were discussed under the following headings:

### Description of Sample Characteristics

Table 1: Distribution of subjects based on age, religion, education and occupation n=60

Sl. No	Demographic variable	f	%
<b>1.</b>	<b>Age of the mother in Years</b>		
	a) 20-25	10	16.7
	b) 26-30	21	35
	c) 31-35	15	25
	d) 36-40	13	21.7
	e) >40	1	1.6
<b>2.</b>	<b>Religion</b>		
	a) Hindu	29	48.3
	b) Muslim	23	38.3
	c) Christian	8	13.4
<b>3.</b>	<b>Education</b>		
	a) No formal education	0	0
	b) Primary school	0	0
	c) High school	14	23.4
	d) Graduate	34	56.6
	e) Post graduate	12	20
<b>4.</b>	<b>Occupation</b>		
	a) Home maker	44	73.3
	b) Self employed	2	3.3
	c) Government	6	10
	d) Private	8	13.3

The data presented in Table 1 shows that 35% of the mothers were between 26-30 years of age and most of them 48.3% were belonging to Hindu religion. Regarding the education level, most of the subjects were graduates and above and none had education below high school level. Most of the subjects 73.3% were home makers and only 3.3% was self- employed.

Table 2: Distribution of subjects based on total number of children and number of children below 7 years. n=60

Sl. No	Demographic variable	f	%
1.	Number of children		
	a) 1	22	36.6
	b) 2	26	43.3
	c) 3	10	16.6
	d) Above 3	2	3.3
2.	Number of children below 7 years		
	a) 1	47	78.4
	b) 2	12	20
	c) 3	1	16.6
	d) Above 3	0	0

The data presented in Table 2 shows that 43.3% of the subjects had only 2 children

and most of the mothers had only 1 child below the age of 7.

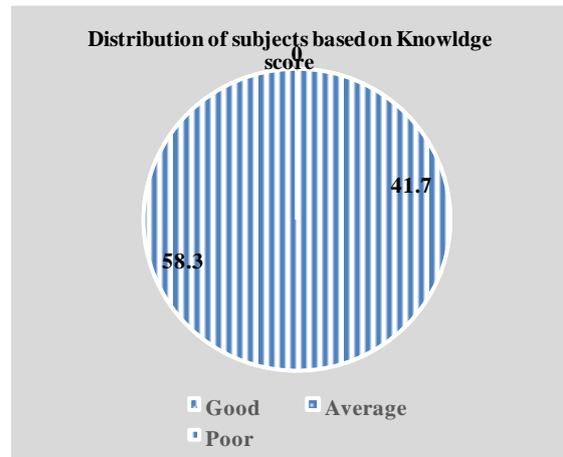


Figure 1: Distribution of subjects based on level of knowledge

The data presented in figure 1 shows that 58% of the subjects had average knowledge, 42% had good knowledge and none had poor knowledge regarding the selection of play materials.

Table 3: Association between knowledge score with selected demographic variables N=60

Sl. No	Demographic variable	Knowledge score		$\chi^2$ value	p value
		< mean	$\geq$ mean		
1.	Education				
	a) High school or less	10	5		
	b) Graduate	13	20	9.46*	0.008
	c) Post graduate	1	11		
2.	Number of children				
	a) 1	7	15		
	b) 2	10	16	2.31	0.31
	c) 3	7	5		

$$\chi^2(1)=3.841, \chi^2(2)=5.99 \text{ *significant}$$

The data presented in table 3 shows a significant association between knowledge score and educational status. ( $\chi^2=9.46$ )

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study shows that majority of mothers of under 7 children had average knowledge about the selection of play materials. Similar findings were found in another study which was conducted to assess the effectiveness of self-instructional module regarding importance of needs of play among parents of hospitalized children. In this study the pretest showed that 60% of the mothers had average knowledge and 21% had good knowledge regarding the

importance of needs of play. [5] This shows an increased requirement for an awareness regarding the importance of selection of play materials of under 7 children to the mothers both at the community and hospital level. The mothers should be educated regarding the cost effective age appropriate and easily available methods of play materials for under 7 children. Thus the study conclude that even though majority of mothers had average knowledge regarding the selection of play materials, through health talks and distribution of educative aids such as leaflets their knowledge level can be uplifted.

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