

Children with conduct disorder (CD) make life harder for teachers

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Abstract

Conduct disorder is one of the most common psychiatric disorders among children and adolescents globally. Therefore, teachers need to have a balanced attitude towards these children. This study aimed to describe the socio-demographic and teaching experience related factors associated with the attitude of school teachers on conduct disorder. A descriptive cross-sectional study comprising of 188 participants was conducted to describe the socio-demographic and teaching experience related factors associated with the attitude of school teachers on children with conduct disorder in selected schools in the Nugegoda MOH area. The attitude was assessed and categorized using a validated scoring system into favorable and unfavorable categories. Exclusion criteria included foreign teachers who worked at selected international schools and school teachers who were not conversant in Sinhalese and/or English. Snowball sampling technique was used. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire, administered as a google form. Data were analysed using SPSS software 26th version. Tables were presented with Chi-squared and Fisher's statistical tests. Favorable attitudes were defined as more than 50% of the total score. The significance level was set at 5%. Most teachers were female (n=176, 93.6%), and 87 (46.3%) were in the 21-30 years age group. 168 (89.4%) teachers were Sinhalese, and most of them (84%) were Buddhists. 78.7% had nuclear families. About half of the population (50.5%) was unmarried, and 113 (60.1%) teachers had no children. The majority of teachers (68.1%, n=128) had unfavorable attitudes, and only 60 (31.9%) had favorable attitudes. As sociodemographic factors, age group, and the number of children teacher had and among teaching experience related factors, the total period of service and grades they taught showed a statistically significant association with favorable attitudes ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the majority of teachers had unfavorable attitudes. Thus, continuous professional education should be introduced to enhance practices among school teachers.

Keywords: *Conduct disorders, teachers reactions/ emotional expression, intervention programs, inclusion of CD students, teaching experience*

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