

stigmatisation in the community and thereby wanted to change schools or put the children into hostels/children's homes.

Multidisciplinary case-conferences were held in the hospital in 352 cases (49%). 23 (6.5%) attended one follow-up clinic.

The incidence also has shown an increasing trend over the years. The common form of abuse was sexual among the 10-14 year olds, physical abuse among 5-10 years and the neglect was seen mainly in under 5 year olds

Conclusions

The problem of sexual abuse is pressing with urgent attention needed to strengthen services.

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Psychological and intellectual effects of an eight-week mindfulness meditation and breathing exercise program in 14 to 16 year-old school children

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Introduction and objectives

Studies have reported diverse bio-psychosocial benefits of mindfulness meditation (MM) and breathing exercise (BE) programs. There is little data from Sri Lanka. The present study aims to assess the impact of such a program on school children.

Method

Parents and students of a Colombo school were informed of the program and were randomly chosen with their consent. Forty (20 male) students were selected for the intervention group and 40 (22 male) formed the control group. At pre-intervention, they completed psychometric tests: intelligence (Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices), examination anxiety (Westside Test Anxiety Scale) and personality maladjustment (Personality Assessment Questionnaire). The

intervention consisted of 5-7minutes and 30 minutes of MM, which was conducted from 6:50-7:40am by a mediation trainer. After 8 weeks 29 (72.5%) completed the intervention and psychometric tests were repeated.

Results

The PAQ scores were normally distributed in the control and intervention groups, hence repeated measures ANOVA was used. The analyses showed a significant reduction in maladjustment ($p < 0.05$). The IQ and examination anxiety scores were skewed and non-parametric tests were used (repeated samples Friedman's two sample analysis). The analyses did not reveal significant differences.

Conclusion

Daily practice MM and BE produced significant reduction in personality maladjustment. Lack of significant differences in the IQ and Anxiety scores could be due to the small sample size. Studies with larger representative samples are planned to explore the impact of such interventions.

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Socio-economic disparities and psychosocial adversities which affect prefrontal function of early adolescence

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Introduction and objectives

The protracted maturation of the prefrontal cortex (PFC), which extends into adolescence, provides maximum opportunity for the different life experiences. Little is known about the underlying mental systems that

mediate the SEX disparities in cognitive performance. Objective of the study was to investigate the association of executive function with socioeconomic status of adolescents in Galle District.

Method

Cross-sectional study was conducted on female adolescents (11 to 14 years, n=200) in Galle District including both rural and urban schools. Self-administered questionnaire was applied to assess socioeconomic status of parents and psychosocial adversity scale was used to investigate confounders affecting executive function. Children performed Computer based executive function test battery including inhibition task (stop signal paradigm) and visuo-spatial working memory task (pig house paradigm).

Results

Mean scores of memory and inhibition tasks were 21.20 (SD+7.36) and 672.46 (SD+169.35) respectively. Inhibition task was significantly correlated with family income level ($r=0.204$; $p=0.001$) and psychosocial adversity score ($p<0.05$). Performance for inhibition task of adolescents whose parents had only primary education was 414.89 (SD ± 137.44), higher than in adolescents whose parents have studied up to secondary educational level 386.36 (SD ± 115.44). Higher score for working memory task was observed among high income families 21.71 (SD ± 5.29) compared to low income families 15.60 (SD ± 5.19). Further inhibition task performance was poor in adolescents' whose parents were of a low occupational category 739.39 (SD ± 230.03) when compared to adolescents of professionally qualified parents (687.58 (SD ± 164.31)).

Conclusions

Socioeconomic status is an important predictor of neurocognitive function. Family income strongly mediates and parent education strongly moderates cognitive function.

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Psychological morbidity and illness perception among patients receiving treatment for tuberculosis in a tertiary care centre in Sri Lanka

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Introduction and objectives

To describe the disease perception and prevalence of depression and anxiety among TB patients at National Hospital for Respiratory Diseases, Welisara, Sri Lanka.

Method

A descriptive cross sectional study involving TB patients from both inpatient and outpatient clinic settings was conducted. All consecutive patients who gave informed consent were assessed using the self administered validated Sinhala and Tamil translations of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire (BIPQ).

Results

A total of 254 inpatient patients and 176 clinic patients participated. Of the clinic patients, 17.6% screened positive for anxiety and 8.5% screened positive for depression. Of the inpatient patients 25.2% had depression and 12.6% had anxiety. Mean BIPQ score was 27.44 for the whole population and for inpatient and clinic patients the mean scores were 23.84 and 29.91, respectively. Prevalence of depression was significantly higher among inpatient patients ($p<0.0001$), elderly age groups ($p=0.007$) and in patients with low education levels ($p=0.012$). Previously treated TB patients and those on Category 2 treatment regime had a higher proportion of persons with depression ($p=0.004$ and $p=0.002$). Among the Inpatient patients, previously treated patients, patients with low education level, those with depression and anxiety had a higher BIPQ score ($p=0.002$, $p=0.005$,