

Knowledge, Perception, and Attitude of Saudi Mothers Towards Discussing Child Sexual Abuse: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Abuse is a matter of concern in all societies. A mother's knowledge regarding "child sexual abuse" (CSA), could play an important role in child protection against this preventable social and indeed global problem.

Objective: The aim of this study was to explore the knowledge, perception, and attitude of Saudi mothers towards discussing child sexual abuse.

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Saudi Arabia using a web-based survey from August 2022 to October 2022. The sample included Saudi mothers who have at least one child aged ≤ 14 years and are using social media platforms.

Results: A total of 1765 participants in this study. The majority of the mothers (70.3%) were aware of the existence of Saudi prevention laws about sexual abuse. Interestingly, 60.1% of the mothers agreed that the majority of sexual abuse is due to someone trusted or a relative. Saudi mothers showed a moderately positive attitude towards discussing CSA with their kids. Mothers from the Southern region were 51.0% less likely to discuss CSA with kids ($p < 0.001$). The education level of the parents, the age of the mother, and the monthly income of the family showed a direct relationship with the likelihood of discussing CSA with kids ($p < 0.05$). Saudi mothers showed a moderately positive attitude towards discussing CSA with kids.

Conclusion: Knowledgeable mothers who have a positive attitude can discuss preventive measures more effectively with their children to make them educated so that they can say no to sexual abuse and report it if it occurs.

Keywords: Attitudes, Child abuse; Knowledge; Mothers; Perception; Prevention; Saudi Arabia; Sexual abuse.

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