

PP 25: Should school teachers handling children with conduct disorder punish a child?

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Introduction: Conduct disorder is one of the most common psychiatric disorders among children and adolescents in the world. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to know the proper practices in handling these children.

Objective: To describe the socio demographic and teaching experience related factors associated with the practice of schoolteachers in handling conduct disorder.

Method: A descriptive cross sectional study comprising 188 participants was conducted in selected schools in the Nugegoda MOH area. The extent of practice was assessed using a validated scoring system and categorized as adequate and inadequate. Exclusion criteria included foreign teachers who worked at selected international schools and school teachers who were not conversant in Sinhala and/or English. Snowball sampling technique was used. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which was used as a google form. Adequate practices were defined as more than 50% from the total score. The significance level was set at 5%.

Results: Among the study population (n=188), only 49 (26.1%) teachers had adequate practices on conduct disorder whereas majority 139 (73.9%) had inadequate practices. Number of children the teacher has and the grade/s they taught, showed statistically significant associations with adequate practices ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Most of the teachers had inadequate practices. Therefore, continuous professional education should be introduced to school teachers to enhance practices related to handling children with conduct disorder.

Keywords: Conduct disorder, school teachers, children, punishment