

Experiences of mothers of children with hearing loss-a qualitative analysis

Madushani, K.D. I.¹ *and Ileperuma, L.D.¹

¹*Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

*KALUWADE_sh16019@stu.kln.ac.lk

Background: If the professional can determine what the mother thinks, feels and how to adapt to the child's condition, it can predict how effectively the treatments can be implemented. This study aimed to explore the experiences of mothers of children with permanent hearing loss. This included which coping strategies were used throughout their experience to adapt individually to the diagnosis of children's hearing loss and support and services received to adapt to the diagnosis were studied.

Methods: This was a qualitative study using a phenomenological approach. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually. A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The study population was fifteen mothers of children with permanent childhood hearing loss (PCHL). Three mothers of children with PCHL were recruited for the pilot study and twelve mothers were recruited in the main study. Mothers of children with other co-existing impairments such as cognitive, physical disabilities and mothers with hearing impairment were excluded from the study.

Results: The study revealed six major themes: initial thoughts, initial reactions, current challenges, coping strategies, expectations, and support and services received. Additionally, six subthemes also emerged, in which four types of coping strategies were identified: problem-focus, emotional-focus, social support and religious focus. Two subthemes were identified under the support and services received: satisfied experiences and dissatisfied experiences.

Conclusions: Parental involvement is a vital part of the management process of children with disabilities. Based on the mother's positive adaptation to the child's condition, parental involvement in the children can be judged. The themes identified explained the experiences of mothers' adaptation to the child's hearing loss and the support and services received for mothers to adapt to the child's hearing loss. If professionals understand what mothers are thinking and feeling, it follows that they will be able to work more effectively in their treatment collaborations with mothers of children with hearing loss.

Key words: *Experiences, Hearing loss, Mothers, Qualitative Analysis*