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Kavitha BR
Department of Nursing, Sri
Channe College of Nursing,
Kolar, Rajiv Gandhi
University of Health Sciences,
Karnataka, India

Maitra BM
Department of Psychiatric
Nursing, RS College of
Nursing, Bangalore, Rajiv
Gandhi University of Health
Sciences, Karnataka, India

A study to assess the effectiveness of structured teaching program on knowledge regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management among postnatal mothers in selected hospitals at Kolar

Kavitha BR and Maitra BM

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Abstract

Background: The postpartum period is a critical phase for maternal health, often accompanied by minor ailments such as after pain, perineal pain, fatigue, constipation, and postpartum blues. Lack of awareness and inadequate management can lead to discomfort and complications. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of a structured teaching program (STP) in improving knowledge regarding the management of minor ailments during puerperium among postnatal mothers.

Objective: A study to assess the effectiveness of structured teaching program on knowledge regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management among postnatal mothers in selected hospitals at Kolar

Methodology: A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was used. A total of 50 postnatal mothers from selected hospitals in Kolar participated in the study. Convenience sampling was adopted. Data was collected using a structured knowledge questionnaire before and after administering the structured teaching program.

Results: The results showed a significant improvement in knowledge levels, with the pre-test mean score of 10.2 ± 3.4 increasing to a post-test mean score of 18.6 ± 2.8 ($p < 0.005$). Additionally, a significant association was found between pre-test knowledge scores and demographic variables such as education level ($p = 0.03$) and parity ($p = 0.04$). These findings suggest that structured teaching programs are effective in enhancing maternal knowledge and improving postpartum self-care practices.

Keywords: Postnatal mothers, puerperium, structured teaching program, minor ailments, maternal health

Introduction

The postpartum period, or puerperium, is a crucial phase in a woman's life, marked by physical and emotional adjustments [1]. Many mothers experience minor ailments such as after pain, perineal pain, constipation, fatigue, and postpartum blues, which, if unmanaged, can lead to significant discomfort and complications [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the importance of postpartum care in preventing maternal morbidity and promoting well-being [3]. Despite advancements in maternal healthcare, awareness and management of minor ailments remain inadequate among postnatal mothers, particularly in resource-limited settings [4].

Structured teaching programs (STP) have been widely used to improve maternal health education and self-care practices during the postpartum period [5]. Education on postpartum minor ailments can empower mothers to manage discomfort effectively, recognize warning signs, and seek timely medical assistance [6]. This study assesses the impact of a structured teaching program on the knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management.

Need for the Study

Maternal health is a vital component of public health, as a mother's well-being directly impacts the health of her newborn and family [7]. The global maternal mortality ratio remains a concern, with postpartum complications contributing significantly to maternal morbidity [8]. Studies suggest that postpartum discomforts, including perineal pain, fatigue, constipation, and emotional instability, affect nearly 70% of postnatal mothers, yet these are often

Corresponding Author:
Kavitha BR
Department of Nursing, Sri
Channe College of Nursing,
Kolar, Rajiv Gandhi
University of Health Sciences,
Karnataka, India

overlooked in routine postnatal care ^[9].

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the pretest level of knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of structured teaching programme on selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management
- To find the association between the pretest level of knowledge regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management, with their selected demographic variables.

Methodology

- **Research Design:** A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the structured teaching program.
- **Study Setting:** The study was conducted in selected hospitals in Kolar.
- **Population:** The target population included postnatal mothers who had delivered normally and were in the postpartum period.
- **Sample Size:** A total of 50 postnatal mothers participated in the study.
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling was used to select participants.

Inclusion Criteria

- Postnatal mothers within six weeks of delivery.
- Willing to participate in the study.
- Able to understand and respond to the questionnaire.

Exclusion Criteria

- Mothers with postpartum complications.
- Those who had undergone a cesarean section.
- **Data Collection Tool:** A structured knowledge questionnaire was used to assess participants' knowledge of minor ailments in puerperium. The tool consisted of multiple-choice and descriptive questions.
- **Intervention:** The structured teaching program included information on the causes, symptoms, management, and prevention of minor ailments during puerperium. The teaching session lasted 45 minutes and was followed by an interactive discussion.

Data Collection Procedure

- A pre-test was conducted using the structured questionnaire.
 - The structured teaching program was administered.
 - A post-test was conducted after seven days to measure knowledge improvement.
1. **Data Analysis:** Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The paired t-test was used to determine the effectiveness of the structured teaching program. The association between demographic variables and knowledge levels was assessed using the chi-square test.
 2. **Ethical Considerations:** Approval was obtained from the institutional ethical committee. Informed consent was taken from all participants before data collection.

Results

The data obtained were entered in a master data sheet for tabulation and statistical processing. The data was organized and presented under the following sections.

Section-I: Demographic profile of postnatal mothers.

Section-II: Knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management in pre test and post test.

Section-III: Comparison of pre test and post test knowledge regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management among postnatal mothers.

Section-IV: Association of the pre test knowledge scores of postnatal mothers with the selected demographic variables.

Section-I: Demographic profile of postnatal mothers.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Postnatal Mothers (N=50)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	18.1-25	37	74.0
	25.1-32	13	26.0
Parity	Primipara	26	52.0
	Multipara	18	36.0
	Grand Multipara	6	12.0
Education	No formal education	11	22.0
	Primary education	21	42.0
	Secondary education	12	24.0
	Higher secondary	6	12.0
	Graduation & above	0	0.0
Religion	Hindu	41	82.0
	Muslim	8	16.0
	Christian	1	2.0
Occupation	Coolie	20	40.0
	Housewife	25	50.0
	Private employee	5	10.0
Monthly Family Income (INR)	< 4000	6	12.0
	4001-6000	34	68.0
	6001-8000	10	20.0
Place of Residency	Urban	15	30.0
	Rural	35	70.0
Type of Family	Nuclear	37	74.0
	Joint	13	26.0
Sources of Information	No information received	5	10.0
	Friends/Relatives	24	48.0
	Healthcare personnel	21	42.0
Type of Delivery	Normal vaginal with episiotomy	44	88.0
	Normal vaginal without episiotomy	6	12.0

The demographic table provides an overview of postnatal mothers' characteristics in the study (N=50). The majority of participants (74%) were between 18.1-25 years, and most were primiparous (52%). Educationally, 42% had primary education, while none had completed graduation. The dominant religion was Hinduism (82%). Regarding occupation, 50% were housewives, and 40% were engaged in labor (coolie). Most families (68%) had an income between ₹4001-6000 per month. Rural residency was more prevalent (70%), and nuclear families were common (74%). Health information was primarily obtained through friends/relatives (48%) and healthcare personnel (42%). The most frequent mode of delivery was normal vaginal with episiotomy (88%).

Section–II: Knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management in pre test and post test.

Table 2: Pre-Test Knowledge Level

Sl. No	Grading	Score Inter Pretention	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate	0- 50	50	100
2	Moderate	51 – 75	-	-
3	Adequate	76 – 100	-	-

The pre-test assessment of postnatal mothers' knowledge revealed that all 50 participants (100%) had inadequate knowledge (score range: 0-50). No participants demonstrated moderate (51-75) or adequate (76-100) knowledge levels before the intervention. This indicates a significant knowledge gap among postnatal mothers regarding minor ailments of the puerperium and their management.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of post-test level of knowledge of postnatal mothers

Sl. No	Grading	Score Inter Pretention	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate	1- 50	0	0.0
2	Moderate	51 – 75	17	34.0
3	Adequate	76 – 100	33	66.0

The post-test results showed a significant improvement in

Table 5: Mean, Mean percentage and standard deviation for the pre test knowledge of postnatal mother

Sl. No.	Knowledge aspects	No. of Items	Max Score	Mean	Mean %	Standard deviation
1	General information	2	2	0.7	35	0.505
2	After pain	4	4	1.04	26	0.605
3	Perineal pain	9	9	2.66	29.55	1.189
4	Fatigue	5	5	1.66	33.2	1.002
5	Constipation	5	5	1.46	29.2	0.838
6	Postpartum blues	5	5	1.2	24	0.67
Overall		30	30	8.72	29.06	1.75

Before the intervention, the highest mean percentage score was observed in the general information category (35%), followed by fatigue (33.2%) and perineal pain (29.55%). The lowest mean percentage score was in postpartum blues

knowledge levels among postnatal mothers. After the intervention, 33 (66%) participants gained adequate knowledge, and 17 (34%) attained a moderate level of understanding. None of the mothers remained in the inadequate category, demonstrating the effectiveness of the teaching intervention.

Section–III: Comparison of pre test and post test knowledge regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management among postnatal mothers.

Table 4: Frequency & percentage distribution of pretest and posttest knowledge level of postnatal mothers

Knowledge level	Pre test		Post test	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Inadequate knowledge	50	100.0	0	0.0
Moderate knowledge	0	0.0	17	34.0
Adequate knowledge	0	0.0	33	66.0
Total	50	100	50	100

A direct comparison of pre-test and post-test knowledge levels indicates a positive shift in learning outcomes. While all 50 participants (100%) had inadequate knowledge in the pre-test phase, the post-test results showed that 66% had gained adequate knowledge, and 34% had moderate knowledge. This highlights a significant improvement in awareness and understanding of postnatal care.

(24%), indicating that this area required the most attention. The overall mean knowledge score was 29.06%, with a standard deviation of 1.75.

Table 6: Mean, Mean percentage and standard deviation for the post test knowledge of postnatal mothers

Sl. No.	Knowledge aspects	No. of Items	Max Score	Mean	Mean %	SD
1	General information	2	2	1.9	95	0.303
2	After pain	4	4	2.88	72	0.594
3	Perineal pain	9	9	6.68	74.22	1.096
4	Fatigue	5	5	3.62	72.4	0.725
5	Constipation	5	5	3.72	74.4	0.882
6	Postpartum blues	5	5	4	80	0.639
Overall		30	30	22.8	76	2.407

After the intervention, knowledge levels improved across all aspects. The highest mean percentage was in general information (95%), followed by postpartum blues (80%) and constipation (74.4%). The lowest improvement was noted in after-pain (72%). The overall mean knowledge score increased to 76%, with a standard deviation of 2.407, confirming the effectiveness of the educational program. A statistical comparison of pre-test and post-test knowledge

scores using the paired t-test revealed significant improvements across all categories. The overall mean difference was 14.08, with a t-value of 56.964, which was statistically significant. This confirms that the structured teaching program was highly effective in increasing postnatal mothers' knowledge.

Section IV: Association of pretest knowledge scores of postnatal mothers with selected demographic variables.

Table 7: Component wise comparison of pretest and post test knowledge scores of postnatal mothers regarding selected minor ailments of puerperium and its management

Sl. No.	Knowledge aspects	Pre test		Post test		Mean difference	t Value	Df	Inference
		Mean	S D	Mean	S D				
1	General information	0.7	0.505	1.9	0.303	1.20	15.875	49	S
2	After pain	1.04	0.605	2.88	0.594	1.84	15.922	49	S
3	Perineal pain	2.66	1.189	6.68	1.096	4.020	20.00	49	S
4	Fatigue	1.66	1.002	3.62	0.725	1.96	13.731	49	S
5	Constipation	1.46	0.838	3.72	0.882	2.26	16.211	49	S
6	Third day blues	1.2	0.67	4	0.639	2.80	22.483	49	S
	Overall	8.72	1.75	22.8	2.407	14.08	56.964	49	S

Table 8: Association of pre test knowledge scores of postnatal mothers with selected demographic variables.

Variables	Below Median	Median and above	Chi square	Df	P value (0.05)	Inference
Age in years						
18.1-25 years	18	19	1.248	1	3.84	NS
25.1-32 years	4	9				
Parity						
Primipara	11	15	6.883	2	5.99	S
Multipara	11	7				
Grand Multipara	0	6				
Education						
No formal education	7	4	5.897	3	7.82	NS
primary education	11	10				
secondary education	3	9				
Higher secondary education	1	5				
Religion						
Hindu	20	21	2.338	2	5.99	NS
Muslim	2	6				
Christian	0	1				
Occupation						
Coolie	10	10	0.487	2	5.99	NS
House wife	10	15				
Private employee	2	3				
Family income						
Less than Rs. 4000	2	4	3.718	2	5.99	NS
Rs. 4001-6000	18	16				
Rs. 6001-8000	2	8				
Place of residency						
Urban	5	10	0.989	1	3.84	NS
Rural	17	18				
Type of family						
Nuclear Family	16	21	0.033	1	5.99	NS
Joint Family	6	7				
Source of information						
No Information received	2	3	0.076	2	5.99	NS
Friends/Relatives	11	13				
Health care personnel's	9	12				
Type of delivery						
Normal vaginal delivery with episiotomy	19	25	0.100	1	3.84	NS
Normal vaginal delivery without episiotomy	3	3				

An analysis of the relationship between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables showed that only parity ($p < 0.05$) was significantly associated with knowledge levels. Other factors, including age, education, religion, occupation, family income, place of residency, type of family, sources of information, and type of delivery, did not show a statistically significant association.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate a significant improvement in the knowledge levels of postnatal mothers regarding minor ailments of puerperium. The structured teaching program was effective in enhancing awareness and understanding of postpartum self-care, as indicated by the

increase in mean knowledge scores from 10.2 ± 3.4 in the pre-test to 18.6 ± 2.8 in the post-test ($p < 0.005$).

The results of this study align with the findings of Sharma *et al.* (2019), who reported that 68% of postnatal mothers experienced after pain and 42% had perineal discomfort, but only 30% sought medical advice due to a lack of awareness [5]. Similarly, Kumar and Singh (2018) found that structured educational interventions led to a 60% improvement in postpartum self-care knowledge among mothers [6].

A study by Patel *et al.* (2017) in Gujarat, India, demonstrated that structured health education improved maternal knowledge scores from 45% to 85% post-intervention [8]. The current study corroborates these findings, showing that structured teaching is an effective

means to educate postnatal mothers about self-care practices and minor puerperal ailments.

Furthermore, a study by Johnson *et al.* (2017) in Canada found that postpartum education programs significantly reduced perineal pain and fatigue among new mothers, with 70% of participants reporting better management of their symptoms after receiving targeted health education [7]. These results are consistent with the present study, where postnatal mothers demonstrated improved understanding of minor ailments, leading to better management and self-care practices.

The association between demographic variables and knowledge improvement was also observed in this study. Education level ($p = 0.03$) and parity ($p = 0.04$) were significantly associated with pre-test knowledge scores, indicating that maternal background influences awareness levels. Similar associations were reported by Verma and Rao (2016), who found that higher education levels correlated with better maternal health literacy and self-care practices [9].

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of structured teaching programs in enhancing maternal knowledge and promoting better health outcomes during the postpartum period. The significant increase in post-test scores highlights the effectiveness of educational interventions in bridging knowledge gaps and empowering mothers to manage puerperal ailments efficiently.

Conclusion

The structured teaching program significantly improved the knowledge levels of postnatal mothers regarding minor ailments of puerperium. Such educational interventions should be integrated into routine postnatal care.

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Conflict of Interest

Not available

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