

Parental knowledge attitude and practices Concerning their children presenting with febrile convulsions in Dar Es salaam.

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Abstract:

Background:

There is insufficient correct knowledge of childhood convulsions since many parents do not know the fact that febrile convulsions can occur due to fever. Many parents do not know the long term effects of febrile convulsions. Moreover, parents also do not know how to attend a convulsing child at home. Not knowing how to manage a convulsing child at home results into parents going into panic and confusion necessitating the use of various unpleasant home remedies when confronted with such a situation.

Objective:

The Main objective of this study was to assess the parents' knowledge, attitude and practices concerning children with febrile convulsions in Mwananyamala hospital and Kambangwa dispensary, Kinondoni District, Dar es salaam, Tanzania. Methodology: This was a cross-sectional descriptive hospital-based study, comprising 152 parents with children affected with febrile convulsions and/or have had a history of febrile convulsions aged less than six years. The participants were interviewed using a structured questionnaire and purposive sampling method was used.

Results:

Majority of participants, 127 (83.6%), knew that febrile convulsions were associated with fever while other parents, 14 (9.2%) and 4 (2.6%), attributed febrile convulsions to demonic possession and bewitchment respectively. Amongst the participants, 123 (80.3%) parents had concerns for long term effect of febrile convulsions that can progress to epilepsy. The commonest immediate effect was fear of death as expressed by 96 (63.2%) study participants. Majority of the parents, 129 (84.9%), took their children to hospital during febrile convulsions while 106 (69.7%) applied home treatment. Garlic was the most commonly used item to treat convulsions at home 81(53.3%). Among the unpleasant items used were sewage mud and feces, direct urination, elephant dung and garlic.

Conclusion:

Majority of the parents knows how to describe febrile convulsions but there are some who still believe in other causes of febrile convulsions. Due to lack of adequate education, parent's fear of febrile convulsions has resulted into negative attitude and improper management at home.

Recommendation:

Creating awareness among parents and caregivers by providing adequate health education on febrile convulsions can reduce their fear. This should be done in the clinics during vaccination visits and in the pediatric ward.
