

HUMAN WELLNESS - A HOLISTIC APPROACH



WELLNESS
— everyday —

Editors

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DETERMINANTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS, NUTRITIONAL STATUS AND SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE OF INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Background: Intellectual disability affects 3% of the total pediatric population. Disabled children are known to be at high risk for developing malnutrition, which may partly explain the growth retardation often encountered in such children. Various studies have highlighted socioeconomic, nutritional and environmental aspects as factors resulting in malnutrition. This may have an impact on the developmental adaptive and scholastic achievement in the intellectually disabled children, which in turn affects the overall ability of the children to live in the society. **Objectives:** To examine the pattern of mental retardation found among the intellectually disabled children and to study the socio-demographic profile, nutritional status and scholastic performance. **Methods:** The study was conducted with intellectually disabled children of age 7-18 years attending special school. A structured interview schedule was prepared to get the socioeconomic and nutritional information and a special tool, namely Behavioural Assessment Scales for Indian Children with Mental Retardation designed by National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped was used to know the scholastic achievements. Body Mass Index and haemoglobin was estimated. **Results:** Intellectual disability was found to be more in the age group of 16-18 years and the percentage of disability was more among boys (71%). Nuclear type of family and middle income exhibited more percentage of disabled children. Disability among children was more in Hindu religion (59%) followed by Muslim (29%) and Christian (19%). Children with severe to moderate under nutrition (44% and 27%) was more than normal (12%) counterpart. Mild level of retardation was found to be more in the study subjects (66%) followed by moderate (29%) and severe (5%). Biochemical estimation revealed low levels of haemoglobin in majority of the subjects (severe 32%, moderate 17% and mild 22%). A normal haemoglobin level was evident only in 29 percent. Scholastic achievement was found to be more in the reading and writing domains compared to money, time and number domains. **Conclusion:** Bringing in certain societal influences in customs, and traditions, creating awareness on the predisposing factors of disability among young parents and enhancing the nutritional support can contribute to the decline of occurrence of intellectual disability and improvement in the nutritional status.

Keywords: Intellectual disability, Scholastic, Mental retardation, Domains.

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