ABSTRACT

Child Rearing Practices and Health Related Problems of Women with Epilepsy – Effect of Structured Instructional Module

Women with epilepsy (WWE) are likely to have poorer child rearing knowledge and child rearing practices leading to problems to self and their babies. Child rearing knowledge, practices and health related problems (maternal and baby outcome) of women with epilepsy were compared with that of women without epilepsy (WWoE) and the effect of a structured instructional module on the child rearing knowledge, practices and health related problems (maternal and baby outcome) of WWE was evaluated. The possible predictors that influenced the child rearing practices and baby outcome were identified. The study was conducted in the antenatal clinic of Sree Avittam Thirunal (SAT) Hospital, Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram and the Kerala Registry of Epilepsy and Pregnancy (KREP), Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology. The sample consisted of 100 WWE from the KREP enrolled as per inclusion criteria, and randomized into an intervention and control group, and 93 WWoE who were age, education and parity matched pairs selected from SAT hospital. Seven WWE who had low education did not get matched pairs. The conceptual framework for the study was based on Dorothea Orem’s self care theory.

The main data collection technique was personal interview for which a structured questionnaire was prepared and tested. There were three parts for the questionnaire one meant for the personal interview of each visit during first trimester and third trimester of pregnancy, and the third visit at three to four months post partum. It consisted of sociodemographic and obstetric data sheet, Standard of living index, Height and weight record, child rearing knowledge test (first visit), antenatal health index (second visit), child rearing practice scale, visual analogue scale, maternal involvement scale, and maternal and baby outcome scales (third visit). Epilepsy data sheet for WWE was included in each visit. Each interview took an average of 30 minutes.
The intervention was a printed module, prepared for this study and titled ‘You and Your baby – conception, labor, and infant care- A self Instructional Module for Women with Epilepsy’. After the first interview, this module or an alternate booklet on epilepsy (already available in the Neurology department of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute) was given to the enrolled WWE, randomizing them into intervention and control groups. The comparison group of WWoE was not given any booklet. The child rearing knowledge test was given to all the subjects as pretest and post-test. The researcher conducted all the personal interviews after getting informed consent from the women.

Eighty-eight WWE and Eighty-eight WWoE completed the ten months prospective study, over a period of three years. The major findings were:

1. WWE had significantly poorer baseline child rearing knowledge, child rearing practices, and maternal involvement than WWoE. WWE had gained child-rearing knowledge and became at par with WWoE in the post-test (3 - 4 months post partum).

2. There was no significant difference between WWE and WWoE in the maternal outcome or baby outcome (3 - 4 months post partum).

3. The child rearing knowledge of WWE in the intervention group has significantly improved when compared to the control group. The intervention group of WWE also had shown better child rearing practices and a significantly higher mean maternal involvement score than the control group of WWE.

4. The predictors of child rearing practices were child rearing knowledge, and maternal involvement score. Higher maternal education was found to be a predictor for better baby outcome at three to four months post partum.

This is the first prospective study of child rearing practices of WWE and their babies in the early infancy period.