

Knowledge About ADHD Among Primary School Teachers in Sharjah, UAE

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Introduction

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood conditions worldwide encountered in the academic setting characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity (APA, 2013). ADHD is considered a challenge for both the academic sector as well as the children themselves, therefore, teachers' knowledge about ADHD is vital because students spend most of their time every day at school hence teachers' are the first people to identify a child with ADHD.

Aim

The aim of the study was to assess the level of knowledge about ADHD among primary school teachers in Sharjah, UAE.

Method

- Design:** Cross-sectional study
- Sample:** Convenient sampling was used to collect data from 264 primary school teachers working in 14 schools in Sharjah. **Instrument:**
 - Sociodemographic scale:** This scale consists of 17 items and it measures gender, age, nationality, marital status, educational level, occupational experience, and previous experience with ADHD students. In addition, the key sources of information about ADHD, a review of how much teachers think they knew about ADHD, and their self-perception of their effectiveness as teachers of children with ADHD
 - Knowledge of Attention Deficit Disorders Scale (KADDS):** This scale consists of a 36-item that can be answered as true/false/I don't know. It is divided into 3 subgroups: 1) Symptoms/Diagnosis of ADHD (9 items), 2) General information on the nature, causes and impact of ADHD (15 items), and 3) Treatment of ADHD (12 items). There are 18 positive items and 18 negative items, and a point is given only to questions answered correctly so that scores can range from 0, being the lowest level of knowledge, to 36, being the highest level. For reliability, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71 for each sub-scale and 0.86 for the scale as a whole was produced (Soroa, Gorostiaga, & Balluerk, 2013).
- Data Analysis:** Data was collected and analyzed using SPSS 26. Frequency distribution tables were used to describe the data and tests (i.e. Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis, ANOVA) where statistical significance was set at 5% were performed to identify factors associated with level of knowledge about ADHD.

Results

Socio-demographic

- Out of 264 participants, 78.0% were female; 46.6% were 36-50 years; 55.7% were Non-Local Arabs; 48.5% had ≥ 7 years' experience; 91.7% had a bachelor's degree or above; 90.5% taught in private schools; 57.2% had experience teaching children with ADHD with 34.8% teaching less than 5 children; On a scale of 1-10, only 28.4% believed their capacity to teach a child with ADHD was above 7.
- Before filling the KADDS scale 61.4% thought it was very important to know about ADHD and 58.3% said they only had average knowledge about ADHD.

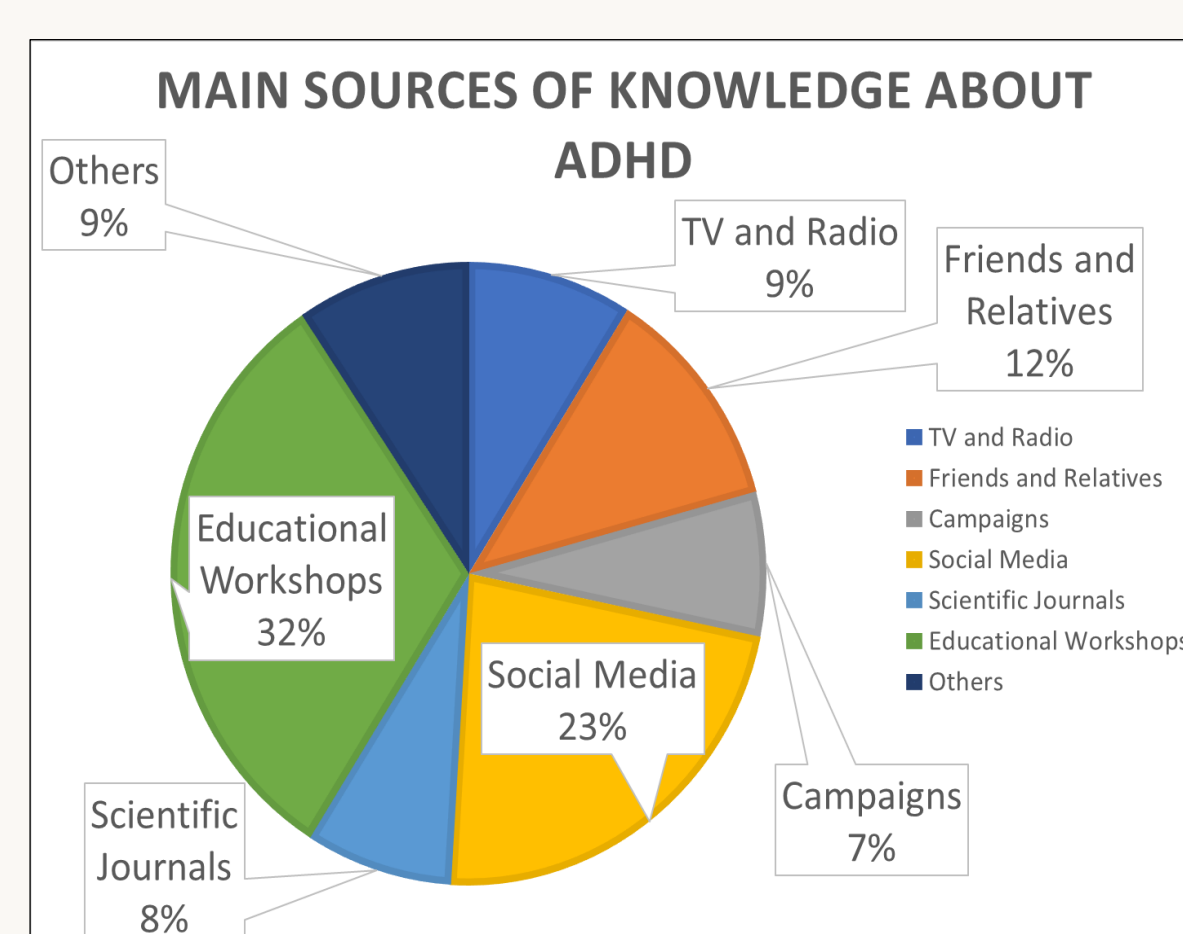


Figure 1: Sources of Knowledge- Pie-chart showing the percentages of different sources for knowledge

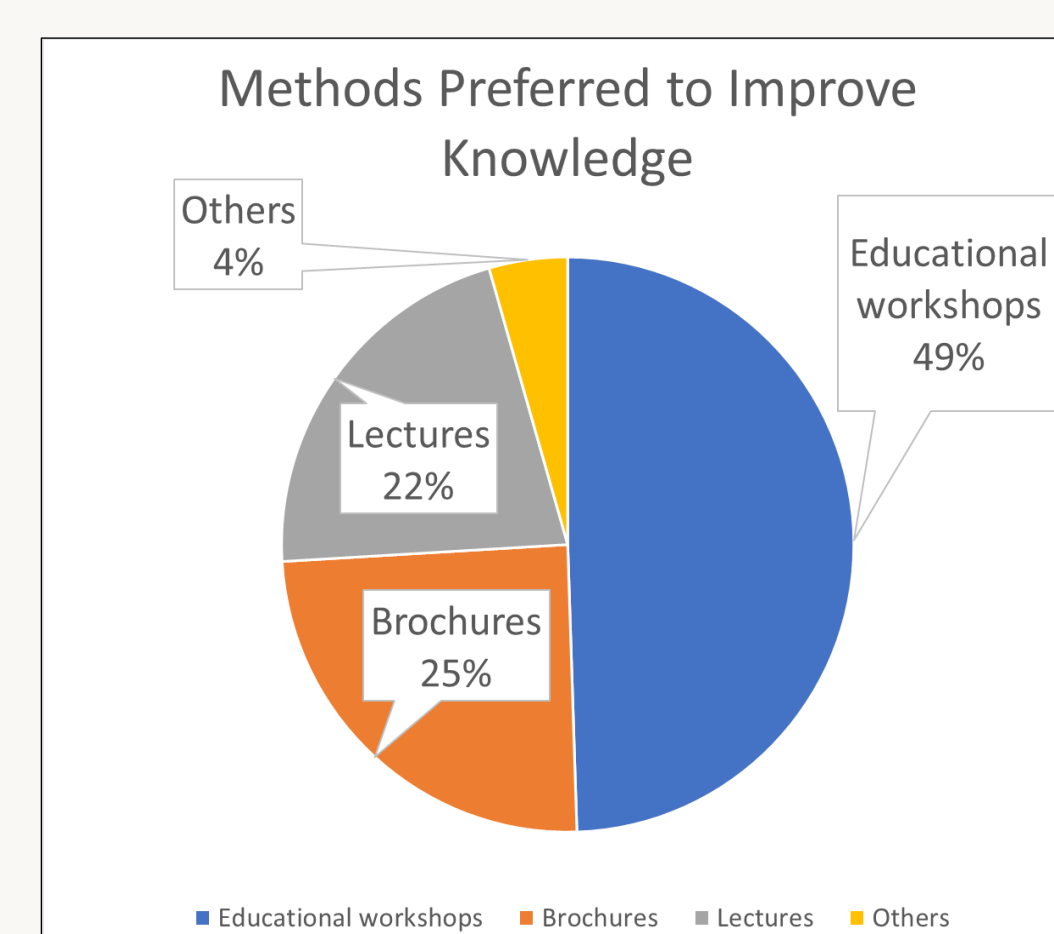


Figure 2: Methods to Improve Knowledge- Pie-chart showing the preferred methods to improve knowledge about ADHD

Knowledge about ADHD

- A higher level of knowledge about ADHD was associated with:
 - Increasing previous experience teaching students with ADHD ($p=0.003$).
 - Teaching in a private school ($p=0.016$).
 - Borderline association with increasing age ($p=0.055$).

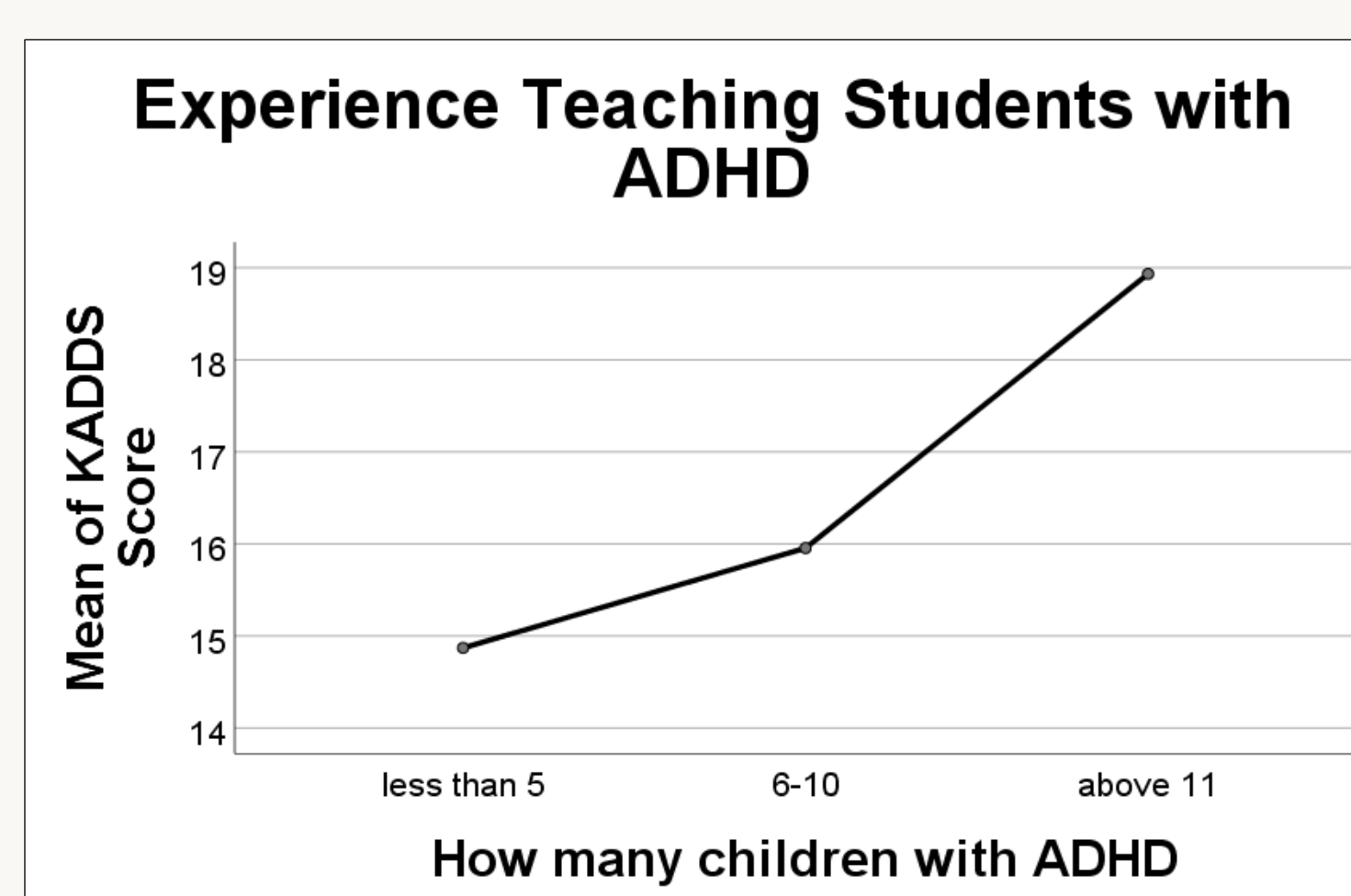


Figure 3: Experience with Students Who Had ADHD- A comparison between mean knowledge score among different amounts of experience with students who had ADHD.

Item	% Answering Correctly
Subscale 1 – 'ADHD Associated Features'	34.4
Subscale 2 – 'Symptoms/Diagnosis'	56.3
Subscale 3 – 'Treatment'	34.1
Total	39.8

Table 4: Response to Knowledge Items- Teachers' Average Percentage Response to Knowledge Items Overall and in the Separate Subscales

Discussion

- This study found that the overall knowledge scores of teachers had a mean of 14.32 ($SD=5.242$) corresponding to 39.8% of the teachers answering correctly. This was significantly lower than (73%) a study conducted by (Kindred, 2019), but higher (17.2%) than a study conducted by Alkahtani, (2013).
- We also found that past experience teaching children with ADHD and the type of school the teachers taught in had a significant effect on the level of knowledge about ADHD.
- It was shown in our study that teachers who have had experience teaching children with ADHD have a higher level of knowledge of ADHD than teachers who have not. This is consistent with the past studies (Al-Moghamsi & Aljohani, 2018; Youssef et al., 2015).
- When comparing the results from private and public schools, we observed that the teachers from private schools tended to have higher overall levels of knowledge of ADHD. This was not consistent with the findings of Kern et al., (2015). The likely cause of this discrepancy is the distribution of teachers who replied from private and public schools in the sample of this study, being 90.5% and 9.5%, respectively.
- Limitations:** The study's used a convenience sampling method which risks a misrepresentation of the population of teachers in Sharjah, as seen with the greater number of female and private school teacher participants.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Teachers' level of knowledge about ADHD in Sharjah was low, although they had a good idea about identifying the signs and symptoms of ADHD. Providing various training about ADHD will enhance the knowledge about ADHD among teachers in Sharjah.

Acknowledgement

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