

Parents' Awareness Regarding the Importance of Communication with their Children about Sexual Education

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Abstract

Background: Sexual education is an effective tool in the prevention of child sexual abuse across the globe. Educating children about sexual matters empowers them in identifying warning signs of sexual abuse. **Aim:** This study aimed to assess parents' awareness regarding the importance of communication with their children about sexual education. **Design:** A descriptive research design was used to conduct this study. **Setting:** This study was conducted at EL-Helal hospital which affiliated to the Egyptian Ministry of Defense. **Sample:** A purposive sample of 185 parents'. **Tools:** Structured interview questionnaire, parents' knowledge regarding sexual education, parent's attitude toward importance of communication to their children about sexual education. **Results:** 56.3% of the studied parents' had unsatisfactory level of knowledge. Also, 51.9% had negative attitude regarding sexual education and its importance of communication with their children. **Conclusion:** There were significant statistical relation between knowledge of parents' and their gender, educational level and residence. There were significant statistical relation between attitude of studied parents' and their age, gender and occupation There was a significant statistical positive correlation between total level of knowledge and total level of attitude among the studied parents'. **Recommendations:** Implementing training program for parents' of children have 10 years or more on their sexual education.

Keywords: Awareness, Children, Parents, Sexual Education.

Introduction

Sexuality is an essential component of healthy development for young people. Sexual development is a multidimensional process encompassing biological, physical, mental, spiritual, social, ethical, religious, cultural, emotional, and behavioral aspects (*Saracho 2023*). Sexual education is essential during childhood to establish proper values and attitudes toward sex, especially because these formative years are a potential turning point in reasonable decision-making and rapid changes in physical development (*Wood et al., 2021*).

Parents' have an essential role to play in the sexual education of their children. Parents' are first educators for their children's and know their children best. The fact that most children rely on their parents' as their main source of information on sexuality shows the importance of these conversations and presents a unique opportunity for parents' to provide factual and age-appropriate information (*Windiastruti & Syamsudin, 2020*).

Parents' awareness is very important because they act as a role models and are most aware of their children's specific development, sexual education has been shown to be very effective when parents' and children discuss sex-related issues together. However, parents' have frequently reported feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed when talking about sex with their children. Some parents' fear from providing sexual education for their children and do not have sufficient knowledge to provide proper education for their children (*Mullis et al., 2021*).

Parent-children communication on sexuality is critical in informing their children about risk and protective behaviors which in turn decrease the likelihood of involvement in risky sexual behaviors (*Russell et al., 2020*). Children who have parents' who share their behaviors, values, and beliefs are more likely to follow the same value system as their parents' (*Rudolph et al., 2022*). Parents' who are open enough for their young child with regards to sexuality have better communication which is important to reduce risky sexual behaviors such as early sexual initiation, unwanted pregnancy, and other reproductive health problems (*Rofiah & Fawaidi, 2023*). Poor communication about sexual health can be damaging. Sexual health messages that are factually incorrect, contradictory, or biased can lead young people to make poor health choices (*Prikhidko & Kenny, 2021*).

Community health nurse specialize in working with the school- aged children to enhance their health and well-being. Thus, CHN are in a unique position to promote the sexual health of children and adolescent. Nurses have to play an important role in sexual health by developing school based health services, and providing sex and relationships education (*Mahmoud et al., 2021*). Community health nurse guide parents' to improve knowledge by provide accurate information and use relevant books, also help parents' to decrease language problem through using correct terminology about sexual organs and help children to use the terms correctly (*Ozgun & Capri, 2023*).

Significance of the study

In Egypt, children sexual abuse is particularly concerning as it has been a longstanding issue, however there is a lack of accurate Egyptian epidemiological studies to assess the full extent of the problem. According to research conducted by Egypt's National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), 60% of Egyptian children have experienced some form of violence, including sexual harassment or abuse. Furthermore, it is found that over 40% of children in Egypt have been subjected to sexual abuse after the age of 10, and 62.6% of these victims were girls (*Swailam et al., 2023*).

Good parent–children communication about sexual health is critical in order to reduce risky sexual behaviors. Previous studies on the role of parents' in the sexual education of their children have highlighted the positive impacts of sexual education by parents' (*Mullis et al., 2021*). Despite widespread awareness of parents' regarding sexual education of their children as an important component of overall health and wellbeing, Egypt's research in this area is limited (*Mahmoud et al., 2021*). Therefore, this study aimed to assess parents' ' awareness regarding importance of communication to their children about sexual education.

Aim of the study

- 1- Assessing parents' knowledge regarding the importance of communication with their children about sexual education.
- 2- Identifying parents' attitude toward the importance of communication with their children about sexual education.

Research questions:

- 1- What are parents' knowledge regarding the importance of communication to their children about sexual education?
- 2- What are parents' attitude toward the importance of communication to their children about sexual education?
- 3- Is there relation between knowledge, attitude of parents' and their demographic characteristics?

Subject and method

The subject and methods for this study was portrayed under the four main items as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| I. Technical item. | II. Operational item. |
| III. Administrative item. | IV. Statistical item. |

I. Technical item:

The technical items included research design, setting, subjects and tools for data collection used in this study.

Research design:

A descriptive research design was used in this study.

Setting:

This study was conducted at EL-Helal hospital for civilian employees, which affiliated to Egyptian Ministry of Defense. The hospital is located at Al-Mohandessen city in Cairo Governorate and provide all medical and surgical health care services for all people and all ages. The hospital consisted of four floors. Ground floor includes outpatient clinic and emergency(ER) department. First floor includes medical director office, nursing director office, laboratory departments and cardiac care unit (CCU). Second floor include operation room, intensive care unit (ICU), cardio thoracic care unit and neonate intensive care unit (NICU). Third floor include general inpatient ward, fourth floor include hemodialysis unit, blood bank and pharmacy, and fifth floor include human resources offices.

Sampling:

Type of the sample: A purposive sample composed of 185 parents from the previous mentioned setting has been recruited in this study according to the following inclusion criteria:

- Parents' who had one or more child at age of 10 or more.
- Parents' who accept to participate in the study.

Sample size: Based on power analysis; Type I error (α) =0.05 with confidence level (1- α) =0.95 and Type II error (β) = 10%, by power test (1- β) =0.90, the sample size was determined by using the Steven Thompson formula that has been adopted from (Thompson, 2012) according to the following equation: -

$$n = \frac{N \times P(1 - P)}{((N - 1) \times (d^2 / z^2)) + P(1 - P)}$$

Where:

- n : Is the sample size
- N : The population size (356)
- z : Confidence level at 95% (1.96)
- d : A proportion of population (assumed to be 0.5)

$$n = \frac{356 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{((356-1) \times (0.05^2 / 1.96^2)) + 0.5(1-0.5)} = 185$$

Therefore, the sample size was found to be 185 participants.

Tools for data collection:

Data was collected using the following tool: -

Tool I: Structured interview questionnaire: -

This tool was developed by the investigator into simple Arabic language after reviewing of relevant and recent literatures and it included three parts:

Part (1): Demographic characteristics for parents':

This part aimed to assess parents' ' demographic characteristics as age, gender, educational level, occupation, marital status, residence, and number of rooms in home, age of their children and gender of children. It consisted of 9 questions (questions no.1 to 9).

Part (2): Parents' knowledge regarding sexual education

This part aimed to assess parents' ' knowledge regarding sexual education and its importance of communication to their children about it. It consisted of 11 open- ended questions (from questions no.11 to 21).

- 1-Meaning of sexual education.
- 2-The reasons that drive parents to educate children sexually.
- 3-Problems resulting from lack of children awareness about sexual education.
- 4-Benefit of talking about sexual education with children
- 5-The appropriate age of children to talk about sexual education.
- 6-The person who should speak on sexual education
- 7-Shamed when talking about such topics in relation to sexual culture
- 8-Sexual education acceptable to talk with children.
- 9-Methods taught to children to protect them from sexual abuse exposure.
- 10-Educate children about healthy relationship between males and females.
- 11-Tell children about their body and what should know.

Scoring system for knowledge items

Responses obtained from the studied parents was checked with model key answer and scored as following: -

- **Zero** grade was given for incorrect/don't know answer.
- **One** grade was given for correct answer.

The total scores of knowledge were summed up converted into a percentage score. It ranged from 0-11 and categorized as following: -

- **Satisfactory knowledge** if total score $\geq 60\%$ (7-11grades).
- **Unsatisfactory knowledge** if total score from $<60\%$ (0-6grades).

Part (3): Parents' attitude toward importance of communication to their children about sexual education: -

This part aimed to assess parents' ' attitude toward sexual education and its importance of communication to their children about it. It consisted of 26 statement as sexual education becomes necessary, I blush to talk about sexual education, I do not recognize sexual education of children, I want to educate my children about sex, sex education is part of the general humanistic culture, sex education is useful for children, Sexual education in an early stage reduces sexual problems in the future, We must educate our children about our sexual culture, which is different from Western culture, questions related to sex must be answered according to child understanding and age group, the father must direct the boy and the mother direct the girl sexually, we should talk with boys about the sexual and physical changes in adolescence.

Scoring system for attitude items

Responses obtained from the studied parents were scored as following: -

- **Agree** was given zero grade.
- **Disagree** was given one grade.

The total scores of attitude were summed up converted into a percentage score It ranged from 0-26 grades and categorized as following: -

- **Positive attitude** if total score $\geq 60\%$ (16-26 grades).
- **Negative attitude** if total score from $<60\%$ (0-15 grades).

II. Operational item:

Included preparatory phase, content validity and reliability, pilot study and field work.

A- The preparatory phase:

It included reviewing the recent related literature and theoretical knowledge of various aspects of the study using books, articles, internet, periodicals, and magazines in order to develop and modify the data collection tools.

B-Tool's Validity and Reliability.

- **Validity:**

The face and content validity was done through a panel of three experts from Community Health Nursing Department, Faculty of Nursing, Helwan University to assess tool comprehensiveness, accuracy, clarity, relevance and appropriateness to the study.

Reliability:

Testing reliability of the proposed tools was done statistically by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient test for knowledge items were 0.81 and attitude items were 0.86.

C-Pilot study:

A pilot study was done on (10%) of the sample (19 parents') to test applicability, feasibility and clarity of questions and time needed to complete the study tools. The subjects who were included in the pilot study were included in the study sample because no modification was done after conducting the pilot study.

D-Field work

- An informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the data collection after explaining the aim of the study.
- Data collection started and completed within three months from the beginning of January (2023) until the end of March (2023).
- Data collection was done at the previous mentioned setting two days per week (Saturday and Monday) by the investigator in the morning and afternoon shift between 12.00 pm to 3.00 PM. In each meeting, the investigator met with 7-8 parents'.
- Each parent took about 15-20 minutes for interviewing and completing the interviewing questionnaires.

Ethical Considerations:

An official permission to conduct the proposed study was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Nursing, Helwan University. Participation in the study is voluntary and subjects were given complete full information about the study and their role. The ethical considerations was include explaining the purpose and nature of the study, stating the possibility to withdraw at any time, confidentiality of the information were not be accessed by any other person without taking permission of the participants. Parents' give consent to conduct the study. Objectives, tools and study technique were illustrated to gain their cooperation. Ethics, values, culture and beliefs were respected.

III. Administrative item:

Approval to carry out this study was obtained from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Helwan University to director of EL-Helal Hospitals asking for cooperation.

IV. Statistical item:

The collected data were organized, categorized, tabulated and statistically analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 27 and Microsoft Excel version 2016. Quantitative data were presented as mean and standard deviation (SD) while qualitative data were expressed as frequency and percentage. The following tests were used:

- **Chi-Square (χ^2) independency test** was used to evaluate the relationship between the independent categorical variables.
- **Fisher exact test (FET)** was used to evaluate the relationship between the independent categorical variables
- **Spearman correlation coefficient** was used to evaluate the Strength and direction of correlation between two continuous variables.

The observed differences and associations were considered as follows:

- $P > 0.05$ was considered non- significant (**NS**).
- $P \leq 0.05$ was considered Significant (**S**).
- $P \leq 0.001$ was considered Highly-Significant (**HS**).

Table (1) shows that, 29.8% of the studied parents' were in age group 43-<48 with mean age 42.31 ± 8.46 and 76.2% of them were females. Also, 44.8% of them had university education or higher. Regarding occupation, 31.8% of them were nurses. Additionally, 89.7% of them were married. Regarding residence, 60.6% of the studied parents' were from urban and 62.8% of them had three rooms or more in their homes. Also, 52.9% of them had 1-3 children and 53.6% of their children were female.

Figure (1) present that, 56.3%, of the studied parents' had unsatisfactory level of total knowledge regarding sexual education and its importance of communication with their children, while 43.7% of them had satisfactory total level of knowledge.

Figure (2) Illustrates that, 51.9%, of the studied parents' had negative attitude toward sexual education and its importance of communication with their children, while 48.1% of them had positive attitude.

Table (2) reveals that, there was a significant statistical positive correlation between total level of knowledge and total level of attitude among the studied parents' P-value 0.002

While, there were no significant statistical relation between total level of knowledge of the studied parents' and their age, occupation, marital status and gender of children P-value= 0.869, 0.717, 0.928 and 0.194 respectively.

Table (3) indicates that, there were significant statistical relation between total level of attitude of studied parents' and their age, gender and occupation (P-value= 0.018, 0.045 and 0.033) respectively.

While, there were no significant statistical relation between total level of attitude of the studied parents' and their educational level, marital status, residence and gender of children (P-value= 0.491, 0.285, 0.571 and 0.631) respectively.

Table (1): Frequency Distribution of Studied Parents' According to their Demographic Characteristics (n=185).

Demographic Characteristics	No	%
Age (years)		
28-<33	26	14.1
33-<38	32	17.3
38-<43	29	15.6
43-<48	55	29.8
≥48	43	23.2
Mean ± SD	42.31±8.46	
Gender		
Male	44	23.8
Female	141	76.2
Educational level		
Basic education	23	12.5
Secondary education	79	42.7
University or higher	83	44.8
Occupation		
Physician	32	17.3
Nurse	59	31.8
Technician	28	15.2
Administrative work	43	23.2
Workers	23	12.5
Marital status		
Married	166	89.7
Widowed	8	4.4
Divorced	11	5.9
Residence		
Rural	73	39.4
Urban	112	60.6
Number of rooms		
Two	51	27.5
Three	116	62.8
>Three	18	9.7
Number of children		
1-3	98	52.9
4-6	64	34.6
>6	23	12.5
Gender of children		
Male	86	46.4
Female	99	53.6

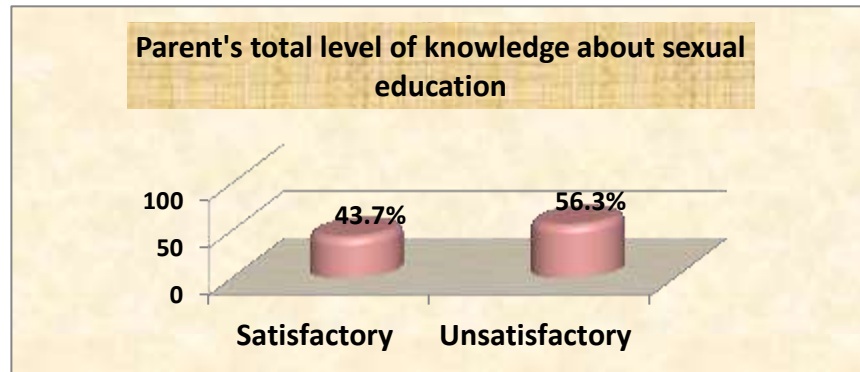


Figure (1): Percentage Distribution of Studied Parents' according to their Total Level of Knowledge regarding Sexual Education (n=185).

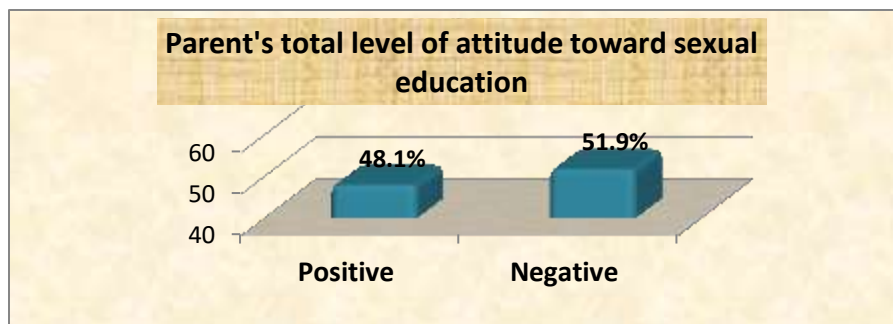


Figure (2): Percentage Distribution of Studied Parents' according to their Total Level of Attitude Toward Sexual Education (n=185).

Table (2): Relation between Total Level of Knowledge of the Studied Parents' and their Demographic Characteristics (n=185).

Demographic characteristics		Total level of knowledge				X ² / FET	P-value
		Satisfactory (n=81)		Unsatisfactory (n=104)			
		No	%	No	%		
Age (years)	28-<33	10	5.4	16	8.6	1.257	0.869 (NS)
	33-<38	14	7.6	18	9.7		
	38-<43	13	7.0	16	8.6		
	43-<48	27	14.6	28	15.1		
	≥48	17	9.2	26	14.1		
Gender	Male	23	12.4	21	11.2	9.449	0.002* (S)
	Female	58	31.4	83	44.9		
Educational level	Basic	9	4.9	14	7.6	0.678	0.017* (S)
	Secondary	33	17.8	46	24.9		
	University or higher	39	21.1	44	23.8		
Occupation	Physician	12	6.5	20	10.8	2.104	0.717 (NS)
	Nurse	23	12.4	36	19.5		
	Technician	14	7.6	14	7.6		

	Administrative work	21	11.4	22	11.9		
	Workers	11	5.9	12	6.5		
Marital status	Married	72	38.9	94	50.8	0.149	0.928 (NS)
	Widowed	4	2.2	4	2.2		
	Divorced	5	2.7	6	3.2		
Residence	Rural	32	17.3	41	22.2	2.991	0.006* (S)
	Urban	49	26.5	63	34.1		
Gender of children	Male	48	25.9	38	20.5	1.690	0.194 (NS)
	Female	33	17.8	66	35.7		

P-value > 0.05= Non-significant (NS) *P-value ≤ 0.05= Significant (S)

Table (3): Relation between Total Level of Attitude of the Studied Parents' and their Demographic Characteristics (n=185).

Demographic characteristics		Total level of attitude				X ² / FET	P-value
		Positive (n=89)		Negative (n=96)			
		No	%	No	%		
Age (years)	28-<33	11	5.9	15	8.1	2.261	0.018* (S)
	33-<38	17	9.2	15	8.1		
	38-<43	13	7.0	16	8.6		
	43-<48	24	13.0	31	16.8		
	≥48	24	13.0	19	10.3		
Gender	Male	19	10.3	25	13.5	0.561	0.045* (S)
	Female	70	37.8	71	38.4		
Educational level	Basic	10	5.4	13	7.0	1.421	0.491 (NS)
	Secondary	42	22.7	37	20.0		
	University or higher	37	20.0	46	24.9		
Occupation	Physician	22	11.9	10	5.4	10.508	0.033* (S)
	Nurse	26	14.1	33	17.3		
	Technician	13	7.0	15	8.1		
	Administrative work	22	11.9	21	11.4		
	Workers	6	3.2	17	9.2		
Marital status	Married	83	44.9	83	44.9	2.511	0.285 (NS)
	Widowed	3	1.6	5	2.7		
	Divorced	3	1.6	8	4.3		
Residence	Rural	37	20.0	36	19.5	0.321	0.571 (NS)
	Urban	52	28.1	60	32.4		
Gender of children	Male	43	23.2	43	23.2	0.230	0.631 (NS)
	Female	46	24.9	53	28.6		

P-value > 0.05= Non-significant (NS) *P-value ≤ 0.05= Significant (S)

Table (4): Correlation between Total Level of Knowledge and Attitude among Studied Parents' (n=185).

Variables	Total level of knowledge	
	r	P-value
Total level of attitude	0.719	0.002*

*P-value ≤ 0.05 = Significant (S)

R = correction coefficient

Discussion

Sex education is a lifelong process of knowledge' acquisition and formation of attitudes, beliefs and values concerning sex toward establishing a strong base for sexual health (*Najafi, et al., 2024*). Parents' frequently are the role models for their children. Parents' play a critical role in sex education to their children, supporting them in order to uphold them understands their sexuality developmental phases, and their attitude to healthy and unhealthy sexual practices. However, education towards this are considered as taboo by parents' in many countries (*Hungo & Casinillo, 2023*).

Part I: Demographic characteristics of the studied parents':

Regarding parent's age, the findings of the present study revealed that more than one quarter of the studied parents' aged 43-<48 and less than one quarter of them aged ≥ 48 years old with mean age 42.31 ± 8.46 (**table 1**).

This finding was agreed with *Bekele et al., (2022)* in a study entitled "Parental communication on sexual and reproductive health issues to their adolescents and affecting factors at Asella town, Ethiopia: a community-based, cross-sectional study" (n=347) parents' and found that 42.7% of the participants were in age group above 45 years old. This finding was agreed with *Singh et al., (2023)* in a study in Nepal about "Parental knowledge and communication with their adolescent on sexual and reproductive health issues" (n= 308) parents' where found that mean age of parents' was (43.5 ± 5.5) years. Also, this finding was disagreed with a study conducted by *Abdullah et al., (2020)* in Malaysia about "The role of parents' in providing sexuality education to their children" (n= 200) parents' where found that 57.4% of participants were in age group less than 40 years old.

Concerning parent's gender, the findings of the present study revealed that more than three quarters of them were females. This finding was agreed with *Zhang and Yuan, (2023)* in a study entitled "Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of parents' toward sexuality education for primary school children in China" (n=19.745) parents' and found that 78.4% of participants were mothers. This finding was supported with *Oti-Boadi, et al., (2023)* in a study conducted in Ghana about "Parental Knowledge and Attitudes towards Sexuality and Sex-Education of Their Children" (n=46) parents' and found that 63.2% of studied participants were females. In addition, this finding was disagreed with *Othman et al., (2020)* in a study conducted in Jordan about " Parent-child communication about sexual and reproductive health: Perspectives of Jordanian and Syrian parents' " (n= 90) parents' and found that 51.8% of participants were males.

Concerning parent's education, the findings of the present study revealed that more than two fifths of studied parents' had university or higher level of education. This finding was agreed with a study conducted by *Ata, (2023)* in Turkey about "Parents' attitudes towards the sexual education of their children" (n= 306) parents' where found that 69.6% of participants had bachelor degree. This finding was disagreed with a study conducted in Malaysia by *Abdullah et al., (2020)* in his study about "The role of parents' in providing sexuality education to their children" (n=200) parents' where found that 63.8% of studied participants had secondary education.

From investigator point of view, this finding could be attributed to the nature of sample which included occupied parents' in hospital and about half of participants were physician and nurses who have university degree.

Regarding parent's marital status, the findings of the present study revealed that majority of them were married. This finding was agreed with *Bekele, et al., (2022)* in a study conducted in Ethiopia (n= 347) parents' and found that 89.75 of participant parents' were married. This finding was supported with *Oti-Boadi et al., (2023)* conducted in Ghana (n= 46 parents') where found that 68.4% of studied participants were married.

Regarding parent's residence, the findings of the present study revealed that three fifths of them were from urban residence. This finding was agreed with a study conducted by *Ata, (2023)* found that 55.2% of participants were from urban residence. This finding was disagreed with *Nadeem et al., (2020)* in a study entitled "Perceptions of Muslim parents' and teachers towards sex education in Pakistan " (n=273 parents') and found that 64.7% of participants were from rural residence.

The investigator believe that might be due to rural parents are more likely adhered to traditional beliefs and values which could refrain them to discuss sexuality knowledge with their children.

Concerning parent's number of children, the findings of the present study revealed that more than half of studied parents' had 1-3 children. This finding was agreed with a study conducted by *Abdullah et al., 2020*, who found that 81.6% of participants had 1-3 children. This finding was disagreed with *Ganji et al., (2022)* in a study conducted in Iran about "Knowledge and attitude and practice of parents' in response to their children's sexual behavior" (n= 600 parents') where found that 63.3% of participants had only one child.

Concerning gender of children, the findings of the present study revealed that children of more than half of studied parents' were female. This finding was agreed with *Buhr and Tannen, 2020*, in a study conducted in Germany about " Parental health literacy and health knowledge, behaviors and outcomes in children: a cross-sectional survey" (n= 4217 parents') where found that 56.3% of studied parents' had female children. This finding was disagreed with a study conducted by *Zhang and Yuan, (2023)* where found that 53.7% of participants had boy children.

Part II: Parent's Knowledge about sexual education.

Answered research question (1) what are parents' knowledge regarding importance of communication to their children about sexual education?

The findings of the present study revealed that more than half of the studied parents' had unsatisfactory level of total knowledge regarding sexual education and its importance of communication with their children (**figure 1**).

This finding was agreed with *Sham, et al., 2020*, in a study entitled "Sexuality Means "Sex": Opinions of Parents' on Sexuality Education in Malaysia" (n=80) parents' and found poor level of knowledge about sex education among 72.0% of participants. Where, most of the participant parents had limited knowledge about sexuality education. This finding was contradicted with a study conducted by *Abdullah et al., (2020)* where found that 69.6% of the respondents showed sufficient knowledge about sexual education, which indicated that they received good education from different sources.

Part III Through Regarding to parents' total level of attitude.

Answered questions NO (2) what are Parents' attitude toward importance of communication to their children about sexual education?

The findings of the present study revealed that more than half of the studied parents' had negative attitude regarding sexual education and its importance of communication with their children (**figure 2**).

This finding was agreed with *Nadeem, et al., 2020*, in a study conducted in Pakistan "Perceptions of Muslim parents' and teachers towards sex education" in Pakistan (n= 273) parents' where found that 67.2% of parents' displayed a negative attitude towards importance of sexual education for their children. This finding was inconsistent with *Bekele, et al., 2022*, in an Ethiopian study (n= 347) respondents and found that 76.1% of parents' had positive attitude regarding sexual education and its importance.

The investigator point of view this related to the less educated parent are more likely to endorse traditional values that hinder the parents to discuss sexuality with their children. Also, from investigators point of view, this finding could be attributed to sexuality education is often seen as a taboo topic among Muslims owing to sociocultural and religious sensitivities. Conflicted with their cultural notions and religious ideologies.

Part III: Relations and correlations between the studied variables

Answer question NO (3) Is there relation between knowledge, attitude of parents' and their demographic characteristics?

The findings of the present study revealed that there were significant statistical relation between total level of knowledge of the studied parents' and their gender, educational level and residence. While, there were no significant

statistical relation between total level of knowledge of the studied parents' and their age, occupation, marital status and gender of children (**table 2**).

From investigators point of view, this finding may indicate that parents' who had received higher education are more likely to acknowledge the significance of sexual education and support the communication with their children about sexual education.

This finding was consistent with *Zhang and Yuan, (2023)* who found that the gender, education and residence of parents' were associated with differences in the scores of sexuality knowledge. Also, this finding was agreed with *Ganji et al., (2022)*, who found that there were no significant statistical relations between total level of knowledge of the studied parents' and their age or gender of children. While, this finding was disagreed with a study conducted by *Abdullah et al., (2020)* who found that there was no significant difference no significant relations between total level of knowledge of the studied parents' and their gender. There were significant differences in parents' knowledge among different age groups.

Regarding to relation between total attitude of the studied parents' and their demographic characteristics, the findings of the present study revealed that there were significant statistical relation between total level of attitude of studied parents' and their age, gender and occupation. While, there were no significant statistical relation between total level of attitude of the studied parents' and their educational level, marital status, residence and gender of children (**table 3**).

From investigators point of view, the significant relation between total level of attitude of studied parents' and their gender could be attributed to that mothers usually have favorable attitudes towards sexual education of children as they are the primary caregiver of their children as well, the closeness of the relationships allows them to have more conversations related to sexuality knowledge especially to their daughters.

This finding was agreed with *Khoori et al., (2020)* who found that there was no significant association between parent's attitude and their child gender. Also, this finding was in the same line with *Cirik et al., (2023)* who conducted a study in Turkey entitled "Attitudes of parents' in the role of a father in Turkey toward child sex education and their sexual communication with their children" (n= 297) parents' and found that there was a positive correlation between parental gender and their attitudes toward sex education and their sexual communication with their children. While, parental educational status does not affect parental attitudes toward children's sex education.

Additionally, this finding was consistent with *Zhang and Yuan, (2023)* who found that the gender of parents' was associated with differences in the scores of sexuality attitudes where the total score of attitudes of the mother was significantly higher than that of the father. This finding was disagreed with *Kee-Jiar and Shih-Hui, (2020)* in a study entitled "A systematic review of parental attitude and preferences towards implementation of sexuality education" who reported that gender of parents', their age and occupations showed significant differences in parental attitudes towards sexual education. Also, this finding was inconsistent with *Ganji et al., (2022)*, who found that parental attitudes toward children's sexual behaviors were affected by the education level of the parents'.

Regarding to correlation between total level of knowledge and total level of attitude among the studied parents' :

The findings of the present study revealed that, there was a significant statistical positive correlation between total level of knowledge and total level of attitude among the studied parents' (**table 4**).

This finding was agreed with *Kee-Jiar and Shih-Hui, (2020)* who reported that parents' knowledge and familiarity towards sexual education could influence their attitude towards sexual education. While, this finding was disagreed with a study conducted by *Sham et al., (2020)* who documented that despite parents' were lacking knowledge regarding sexual education but were aware of the importance of sexual education to their children. From investigators point of view, this finding may indicate that parents' with good sexual health knowledge are more likely to show favorable attitude towards importance of communication to their children about sexual education.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the current study and research questions the following can be concluded that: More than half of the studied parents' had unsatisfactory level of total knowledge regarding sexual education and its importance of communication with their children,. Also, more than half of the them had negative attitude toward sexual education and its importance of communication with their children,

Additionally, there were significant statistically relation between total level of knowledge of the studied parents' and their gender, educational level and residence. And there were significant statistical relation between total level of attitude of studied parents' and their age, gender and occupation. As well there was a significant statistically positive correlation between total level of knowledge and total level of attitude among the studied parents'

Recommendations

- Impalement training program for parents' who have children with 10 years or more on their sexual education
- Increase parents' awareness regarding Continuous and two-way communication between parents' and their children regarding any sex related issues.
- Perform work shop and seminar to provide parents' with up -date and accurate information regarding sexual education to their children.
- **Further researches** should be replicated on a large sample and other places to generalize the findings .

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