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Nursing led interdisciplinary intervention in prevention of girl child mortality and maltreatment

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Background: In Northern India, skewed sex ratios, female feticide and higher child mortality rates for girls have become serious concern. The female child mortality as a result of son preference have increased during the last several decades. Since families cannot know the sex of the fetus due to Indian government policies, they now 'neglect' girl child to ensure there are few survivors. Survival chances of second and third daughters are plunging neglecting healthcare and nutrition has become tool for death as 'good riddance'.

Objectives: To develop and test the effect of a nurse-led interdisciplinary intervention program for preventing girl child maltreatment in high risk families.

Design: prospective randomized controlled trial

Participants: The sample included 134 families who met risk criteria for child neglect and who were randomly assigned to receive either a nurse led counselling intervention or a usual care/non-intervention.

Intervention: Nurses were trained by certified psychotherapist and family counsellors along with the help of safeguarding trainers. Nurses delivered the intervention from last term of pregnancy through three months and then were followed till the first birthday of the child. After the program ended, self-report and observational data were analyzed.

Results: Results for the entire sample indicated positive changes in protective factors (parenting attitudes and attachment); and improved child survival rate (physical, nutritional and psychological care of children) and lesser injuries and reported emergencies. Further testing of the intervention with other target populations is being conducted.

Conclusions: This study demonstrated significant change with greater collaboration between health, social and family disciplines. It spells out the reasons for potential collaboration and suggests some specific ways it can occur. The beneficial effects of an intervention program focusing on early recognition and supporting families to prevent infant and toddler gender related maltreatment and mortality.

Biography

Alpesh Barot has been working as community nursing assistant in Gujrat, India for last 9 years. Completing his masters, he is preparing to pursue his PhD under the department of psychology from Gujraat University. While working in the community, he joined Sonal Foundation and been in-charge of Indo-UK collaborative program preventing child abuse and neglect. He is certified safeguarding trainer for nurses, research manager on a project to help preventing girl child neglect on a multicenteric research study in Northern state of India, Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat.

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