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Research Paper

Significance of Parent-Mediated Intervention and Its Effects on Children with Developmental Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

Background: Developmental disabilities are a group of chronic conditions that can affect a person's physical, intellectual, or emotional development. They can manifest as delays in reaching developmental milestones, or as limitations in areas such as motor performance, vision, hearing, cognition, speech, and behaviour. CDC. (2022) So Parent-mediated intervention is a therapeutic approach that helps parents provide support and intervention to their child. In this approach, parents learn therapy techniques from professionals and then provide those therapies to their child. Nevill et al. (2018) studies show that PMI helps to improve interactions between parents and children. Parents learn more about how to teach their children and improve their children's language and academic skills as well as children's motor, cognitive, communication, and social skills. Karst, J. S., & Van Hecke, A. V. (2012) There are little studies done on parental intervention in developmental disabilities. There are many studies done in parental learning outcomes in Autism (ASD) intervention and their strategies contributing to the quality of family life and children's social learning. Objectivity of the study is to focuses more on need of the parental mediated intervention and their outcomes in children with developmental disabilities. Hypothesis 1. There is a significant need of parent mediated intervention for children with developmental disabilities. Hypothesis 2. Parent mediated intervention has significant effect on the development disabilities of children. **Method:** We included total 30 parents, groups of six children from each developmental disabilities such as Cerebral palsy, Intellectual disabilities, Autism, Learning disabilities, Attention deficit Hyperactive Disorder taken from community based disability Management Research Programme (CDMRP) University of Calicut funded by Social Justice Dept of Kerala Govt. using Convenient sample. Weekly session was given. Before the session starts a need analysis of the study was done using Semi structure interview. This was taken to know the need of the parent mediated intervention. Then parent mediated intervention was given to parents including cognitive emotion and behaviour aspects. After ten session a feedback form was taken from parents to know whether parent mediated intervention was effective for them. Paired T test was done. **Result:** indicates there is a significant need of parent mediated intervention and there is also has significant effect on the development disabilities of children. **Conclusion:** Parent mediated intervention helped

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parents to deal with their children in disabilities, and train their children with cognitive, emotional, behavioural aspects.

Keywords: *Parent mediated intervention, Development disabilities, Intervention effectiveness, Parent child relationship*

We define developmental disabilities as a set of abilities and characteristics that vary from the norm in the limitations they impose on independent participation and acceptance in society. The condition of developmental disabilities is developmental in the sense that delays, disorders, or impairments exist within traditionally conceived developmental domains such as cognitive, communication, social, or motor abilities and appear in the "developmental period," which is usually characterized as before 22 years of age. While low IQ scores are typically associated with and can even be markers for developmental disabilities, other conditions (e.g., cerebral palsy, Asperger syndrome) may impose limitations on individuals with developmental disabilities whose intelligence is at or above average. Typically, in establishing the parameters of developmental disabilities, limitations associated with sensory impairments (i.e., deafness, blindness) are not folded into the definitions unless these impairments occur in combination with impairment in intellectual functioning (e.g., multiple disabilities). Similarly, the focus on developmental and adaptive abilities may distinguish developmental disabilities from most psychiatric conditions, although it is widely acknowledged that individuals may have a dual diagnosis. Samuel et al. (2007). There are many interventions to deal with developmental disabilities. In this we are focusing more on the need for parent mediated intervention (PMI). PMIs are different from more traditional interventions because the parent is the primary intervention facilitator, rather than the clinician. Parent-mediated intervention is a therapeutic approach that helps parents provide support and intervention to their child. In this approach, parents learn therapy techniques from professionals and then provide those therapies to their child. Nevill et al. (2018) studies show that PMI helps to improve interactions between parents and children. Parents learn more about how to teach their children and improve their children's language and academic skills as well as children's motor, cognitive, communication, and social skills. Karst, J. S., & Van Hecke, A. V. (2012) There are little studies done on parental intervention in developmental disabilities. There are many studies done in parental learning outcomes in Autism (ASD) intervention and their strategies contributing to the quality of family life and children's social learning. Objectivity of the study is to focuses more on need of the parental mediated intervention and their outcomes in children with developmental disabilities.

METHOD

Participants

We included total 30 parents, of six children from each developmental disabilities such as Cerebral palsy, Intellectual disabilities, Autism, learning disabilities, Attention deficit Hyperactive Disorder taken from community disability Management Research Programme (CDMRP), University of Calicut using Convenient sample. *Inclusion criteria* Child age range between 4 to 12years and they should have Developmental disabilities such as Cerebral palsy, Intellectual disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disorder, Attention Deficit disorder, Care taker must be parent either father or mother. *Exclusion criteria* Comorbid psychiatric condition, Parents psychiatric condition and developmental disorders, Continuing medications both parent and child.

Tools

- **Semi structure interview:** A semi-structured interview was conducted to explore the need for parent-mediated interventions, focusing on areas such as understanding the child's condition, coping with challenges, seeking professional support, managing the condition effectively, enhancing personal mental well-being, improving communication with the child, and addressing behavioural, cognitive, and social difficulties. Additionally, a feedback form was utilized to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention, covering the same areas to assess its effectiveness.
- **Brief on Parent mediated intervention:** Before the sessions began, children undergo assessments to diagnose their condition. Then a semi-structured interview was conducted to determine the need for parent-mediated interventions. Weekly session was given. Based on the findings, a ten-session parent-mediated intervention program was implemented, focusing on psychoeducation about the condition, cognitive training, behaviour therapy, social skill training and remedial training. Following the completion of the ten sessions, a feedback form was administered to parents to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention, covering the same areas to assess its effectiveness.

Procedure

Before starting the parent-mediated intervention, children undergo assessments to diagnose their condition. These include an Intelligence Test, the NIMHANS Specific Learning Disability Scale, and the Conners' Rating Scale. A checklist is then used to identify specific needs for the parent-mediated intervention, and sessions are designed accordingly. Weekly session was given. The first and second sessions focus on psychoeducation, to parents. The third and fourth sessions involve reviewing how much the parents have understood and providing training on cognitive skills. Cognitive training for parents includes tasks aimed at developing: Concept formation. Attention and concentration, Memory, Perception, Comprehension and Social judgement. In the fifth and sixth sessions, previous sessions reviewed, Behavioural analysis was conducted, and parents receive contingency management training. The seventh and eighth sessions involve follow-ups and social skills training is introduced using role-play. In the ninth and tenth sessions, progress is reviewed, and remedial training is initiated based on the child's individual needs. Then Post session done on feedback of parent mediated intervention.

RESULT

Table 1 Percentage Analysis of the Necessity for Parental-Mediated Intervention

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Do you want to know about the condition of the child? If yes please explain/No	10	100%
Do you want to reduce the trouble face due to your child condition? If yes please explain/No	24	80%
Do you want the professional help in condition of your child? If yes please explain/No?	24	80%
Do you want to learn and manage the child condition instead of depending on the therapist? If yes please explain/No	30	100%
Are you concerned about your mental health while managing your child? If yes please explain/No	30	100%
Do you want to understand the child mental health condition in	27	90%

Items	Frequency	Percentage
different situation? If yes please explain/No		
Do you want to effectively communicate with your child? If yes please explain/No	25	83%
Do you want to manage your child behavior problems? If yes please explain/No	27	90%
Do you want to train your child in cognitive aspects? If yes please explain/No	28	93%
Do you want to train your child in social skills? If yes please explain/No	25	83%

Table 1 indicates the parents need for intervention. The responses were analysed based on frequency and percentage. The results indicate that all parents (100%) expressed the need to understand their child's condition, manage it independently rather than solely relying on a therapist, and showed concern for their mental health. A high percentage (90–93%) of parents wanted to understand their child's mental health in different situations, manage behavioral problems, and train their child in cognitive aspects. Additionally, 80–83% of parents sought professional help, desired to reduce difficulties faced due to the child's condition, and wanted to improve their child's social and communication skills.

Table 2 Percentage analysis of parental feedback regarding the effectiveness of parent mediated intervention.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Are we aware about the conditions of your child? If Yes please explain/No	30	100%
Could you reduce the trouble your child's conditions. If yes please explain/No	30	100%
How far you can receive professional help in guiding the condition of your child? If yes please explain/No	30	100%
Did you learn and manage the child condition instead of depending on a therapist? If yes please explain/No	30	100%
Are you concern about your mental health while managing your child? If yes please explain/No	26	86.6%
Whether you able understand the child mental health condition in different situation? If yes, please explain/No	28	93.3%
Are you able to effectively communicate with your child? If yes please explain/No	28	93.3%
Are you able to manage your child's behavior problems? If yes please explain/No	29	96.6%
Whether you able to train your child in cognitive aspects? If yes please explain/No	30	100%
Are you able to train your child for the development of social skills? If yes please explain/No	30	100%

The analysis reveals that all participants (100%) reported awareness of their child's condition, the ability to reduce the troubles associated with the condition, and receiving professional help. Furthermore, 100% of parents confirmed their involvement in managing

their child's condition independently, and 100% were able to train their child in both cognitive aspects and social skills.

However, 86.6% of parents expressed concerns regarding their mental health while managing their child's condition, indicating a need for further support in this area. Additionally, 93.3% of parents were able to understand their child's mental health condition in various situations and communicate effectively, which is a strong indicator of progress in managing the child's needs. An impressive 96.6% of parents also reported being able to manage their child's behavioral problems.

DISCUSSION

Before the intervention commenced, a pretest was conducted using a need-based parent-mediated intervention checklist with 30 parents. This pretest aimed to assess the parents' initial needs. Following this, a series of 10 intervention sessions was provided, focusing on cognitive, emotional-behavioral, and remedial aspects tailored to the condition and severity of each child's needs. After the completion of the intervention, a post-intervention assessment was conducted with the same 30 parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent-mediated approach.

An analysis of the pre-test checklist responses from 30 parents participating in a parent-mediated intervention revealed significant concerns and knowledge gaps regarding their child's condition. A critical gap in parental knowledge was observed, specifically regarding their child's developmental and behavioral challenges. Parental responses highlighted concerns related to behavioral challenges, hyperactivity, social interactions, and academic performance, indicating a strong need for guidance in managing these issues. This underscores the necessity for structured parent training programs to equip caregivers with effective strategies for supporting their child's development while addressing their own stress and concerns.

Further analysis of parental responses regarding professional support revealed a strong consensus on the need for expert intervention to address various challenges related to their child's development, behavior, and learning. Parents widely acknowledged that professional assistance is essential for addressing developmental issues. These findings emphasize the importance of structured therapeutic programs, behavioral training, and academic support to meet the specific needs of children with developmental and behavioral challenges. Additionally, they highlight the importance of raising awareness about early intervention and ensuring access to professional resources for optimal outcomes.

An analysis of parental responses regarding their willingness to learn and manage their child's condition, rather than solely relying on a therapist, revealed a strong desire for active parental involvement in their child's development. While parents value professional expertise, they recognize the importance of their role in managing their child's condition. Many parents expressed a willingness to actively participate in the intervention process if provided with proper training and guidance. This emphasizes the need for parent training programs, home-based intervention strategies, and continuous professional support to empower parents in effectively supporting their child's development.

Parental responses regarding mental health while managing their child's condition highlighted a mixture of emotional distress, coping mechanisms, and resilience. While many

parents reported experiencing stress, anxiety, and emotional burden, others had developed effective coping mechanisms over time. These responses point to the need for mental health support as part of a comprehensive intervention approach for parents.

An analysis of parental understanding of their child's mental health condition across different situations revealed varying levels of awareness and comprehension. Many parents expressed a strong desire for deeper insights, especially concerning their child's behavior in settings such as school and social interactions. However, some parents struggled with interpreting their child's behaviors, while others felt they already had sufficient knowledge. These findings underscore the importance of continued education and support for parents in understanding their child's mental health in diverse contexts.

Regarding the ability to effectively communicate with their child, responses varied, with some parents reporting success and others facing challenges due to comprehension issues, nonverbal tendencies, or their child's independent nature. These findings indicate the need for strategies to improve communication skills between parents and children.

An analysis of parental responses regarding managing their child's behavioral problems revealed a mix of concern and a strong desire for improvement. Many parents acknowledged the need to manage behaviors such as aggression, emotional outbursts, and hyperactivity, and expressed a desire to teach appropriate behaviors and improve social interactions. This reflects a need for targeted interventions aimed at behavior modification.

Parental responses regarding training their child in cognitive aspects highlighted significant concerns about attention, concentration, memory, and overall learning abilities. Most parents expressed a strong desire to address these challenges, viewing them as barriers to academic success and independent functioning. This underscores the importance of interventions targeting cognitive development to support academic achievement.

Finally, an analysis of parental responses regarding training their child in social skills revealed varying needs related to social interactions, appropriate behavior, and understanding social cues. While many parents recognized age-appropriate social development, others noted the need for more targeted interventions, particularly for children struggling with social communication and independent behavior. This highlights the importance of social skills training for children facing difficulties in these areas.

The analysis of feedback from parents regarding the parent-mediated intervention suggests that most respondents are generally aware of their child's condition, although fewer have a deeper understanding or recognize scholastic issues and available training/therapy options. A small percentage of respondents reported improvements following the intervention. The majority of parents focused on behavioral management strategies, followed by therapy and academic support, while a minority indicated that no intervention was necessary or noted general improvements without specific interventions.

The majority of responses are centered around behavioral interventions and general support, indicating that professional guidance plays a critical role in managing the child's condition. The long-term engagement in therapy highlights that consistent professional help is essential rather than relying on short-term solutions.

Self-reliance is emphasized in many responses, with parents expressing confidence in managing their child's condition. However, they still recognize the importance of professional help, particularly in the initial stages. There is a significant interest among parents in learning more about managing their child's condition, suggesting that many desire further knowledge to improve their child's quality of life. Despite receiving professional support, some uncertainty persists, indicating the need for ongoing guidance.

Regarding mental health, the majority of parents feel they can manage their child's condition with only mild concerns. However, many parents also report experiencing stress or mental strain, emphasizing the need for continued emotional support. Coping strategies such as yoga, motivation classes, and job engagement were mentioned as ways to maintain mental well-being.

In terms of understanding their child's mental health, the majority of parents feel they have some level of comprehension, though some still struggle and may benefit from additional training, support groups, or professional counselling. Schools and therapists continue to play a crucial role in assisting parents in navigating their child's mental health.

When it comes to communication, the majority of parents reported progress, with improvements in their child's communication abilities attributed to therapy and parental efforts. Techniques like parallel talk, repetition, and structured conversation used by therapists have contributed to these improvements. However, 15.38% of parents still face challenges and may benefit from more targeted speech therapy or alternative communication methods.

Parents also reported improvements in behavioral management, with consistent therapy and the application of behavioral techniques aiding in behavior modification. For parents still facing new behavioral challenges, there is a need for behavior tracking methods to recognize patterns and advanced behavior management techniques such as positive reinforcement and structured routines.

In relation to cognitive training, parents expressed active involvement in their child's cognitive exercises, such as holding a pencil, and reported improvements in their child's understanding and academic performance. Parents feel confident in managing the training and apply the strategies learned from therapists to effectively support their child. Positive changes in academic performance were also noted as a result of the cognitive training, with therapists providing guidance on remedial tasks.

Finally, regarding social skills, most parents reported that their child now possesses age-appropriate social skills, such as the ability to communicate socially and respond to social cues like greetings, sharing, and turn-taking. Gradual improvements through social skills training were noted, with children starting to acknowledge classmates, respond to their name being called, and stand in line. Parents actively support their child's learning by using tasks and exposure to real-world social contexts. While positive changes were observed, parents noted that training is ongoing, and sometimes children can be stubborn, particularly in different environments like others' houses.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

The analysis of the pre-test and post-test data on parent-mediated intervention highlights significant findings related to the parents' understanding, management, and involvement in their child's development. The pre-test analysis revealed critical gaps in parental knowledge regarding their child's developmental and behavioral challenges. Parents expressed substantial concerns regarding behavioral issues, hyperactivity, social interactions, and academic performance, underscoring the need for structured parent training programs. These findings emphasize the importance of providing parents with the knowledge and strategies necessary for effectively supporting their child's development while addressing their own emotional and mental health concerns.

Additionally, the results of the post-intervention feedback indicate that professional support remains essential for addressing complex developmental issues, but there is also a strong desire among parents for greater self-reliance and active participation in the intervention process. Although many parents have become more confident in managing their child's condition, they still recognize the value of professional guidance, particularly in the early stages. The need for continuous emotional support and guidance is evident, with many parents experiencing stress and emotional strain, despite improvements in their child's behavior and academic performance.

The findings suggest that while parents have seen progress in areas such as communication, behavior management, cognitive training, and social skills, there is still a demand for ongoing intervention, specifically targeting behavioral issues and the development of social skills. The results of this study emphasize the importance of structured therapeutic programs, consistent professional support, and parent training to ensure optimal outcomes for children with developmental and behavioral challenges.

Overall, the feedback from parents supports the idea that parent-mediated interventions can be effective, but they require continuous, targeted support from professionals to address the diverse needs of children and their families. These findings underline the need for tailored interventions, involving both professional guidance and active parental participation, to support the comprehensive development of children facing behavioral and developmental challenges.

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Conflict of Interest
The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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