

Assessment of Parents' KAP on Head Lice among Children in Johor and Selangor: A Pilot Study

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Structured Abstract

Background: Head lice infestation remains a global issue, continuously impacting the lives of millions of children worldwide. In Malaysia, prevalence rates indicate that it continues to affect school-age children. This study addresses existing knowledge gaps, emphasizing the lack of parental awareness and effective practices in managing head lice. The objectives of this study were to determine the mean levels of knowledge, awareness, and practices (KAP) among parents regarding head lice infestation in Johor and Selangor, to compare these levels based on sociodemographic characteristics, and to explore the associations between KAP among parents concerning head lice infestation.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using a validated questionnaire on KAP related to head lice infestation, distributed among parents in Johor and Selangor. Statistical analysis using SPSS version 28 revealed insights from 295 respondents.

Results: The study found moderate levels of knowledge and awareness among parents, with good practices reported in managing head lice. Interestingly, no significant differences were found in KAP mean scores related to gender, race, state, educational level, or spouse's educational level. However, significant associations were detected between KAP levels and family monthly income, family size, and number of children. Notably, higher family income correlated with better knowledge ($p=0.049$), while larger family size ($p=0.046$) and more children ($p=0.010$) were linked to improved practices in head lice management. Moreover, strong positive correlations were observed between awareness and practices ($r=0.686$, $p<0.001$), indicating that heightened awareness among parents potentially translates into more effective preventive actions against head lice infestation. Conversely, age showed negative associations with both awareness ($r=-0.119$, $p=0.041$) and practices ($r=-0.176$, $p=0.003$), suggesting that younger parents may be more proactive in managing head lice among their children compared to older parents.

Conclusion: In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of targeted educational programs aimed at enhancing parental knowledge and promoting effective practices in managing head lice infestation. By addressing these gaps, stakeholders can better equip parents with the necessary tools and information to protect their children and reduce the prevalence of head lice infestation in Malaysia. Future initiatives should leverage these insights to develop comprehensive strategies that foster proactive behaviours and improve overall community health outcomes.

Keywords: Head lice infestation, Parents, Knowledge, Practice, Awareness

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