The Dementia Awareness and Education Project for Elementary 5th Graders and Families

Authors
Hafarian.L, Salehi.m, Khansari.m, Farin.f & etal

Presenter
Farin.Faraneh
Aims

- Enhancing awareness of dementia among elementary school children
- Encouraging them to change their attitude towards people with dementia
- Empowering them to support the family care-givers
- Raising awareness among their family members
- Reducing stigma
- Uplifting their drive to learn more about dementia
- The need to protect their brain
Method

- **First** The project was introduced to the officials of education Board of Tehran Province in several sessions.

- **After 2 years** of negotiation, Iran Alzheimer’s Association was able to receive their consent to implement the project, raising awareness among elementary 5th graders (age 10) in one of Tehran’s 24 districts.

- **Finally** 44 elementary schools out of 122 were selected by random cluster sampling in district no.2.
Iran
Tehran
District Number 2
Method

- The project was initiated by IAA’s health professionals for the health educators, delivering a comprehensive training on dementia for 2 weeks (6 hours).

- During the sessions, the ways dementia was perceived by children, the need for raising awareness were fully discussed and questions were answered.

- At the end of the course, educational packages containing brochures on “Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias”, “Heads up” (prevention), and a specially developed brochure for children were delivered to the health educators to distribute among 4500 5th graders.
Method

The questionnaire form which was included in the educational package contained 14 questions which were to be answered by the parents. 10 questions were related to IAA’s activities and 4 were for the families with suspected cases of dementia.

- After one month, the questionnaires were collected by the schools. 1554 forms were returned to IAA.
Results indicate:

- **66% of** people thought that dementia meant forgetfulness before reading the information.

- **91.57%** were of the opinion that this project can give better understanding of dementia.
Method

> 25.5% had a case of dementia in their families.

> 55% of families with a case of dementia stated that they have seen behavioral changes in their child.
In conclusion

This project was most effective in raising awareness among children and their families, advocating for the cause, informing about IAA’s services and obtaining an estimate of people with dementia in the selected area.
Cost effectiveness

- The “Dementia Awareness and Education Project for Elementary 5th Graders and Families” is a comprehensive plan, applicable to any age group.

- The target group was the elementary school children who were at a learning age and could be educated easily about prevention (safety belt and hat, suitable diet, mental and physical activities, studying, learning a second language....) It is hoped that awareness raised at an early age will be retained in the brain for a long period of time resulting in reduction of prevalence and socio-economic cost of dementia in future.
Cost effectiveness

- The information provided in the packages enables the children to be more aware of what goes on in the family care-giver’s life and indeed can change their attitude towards a person with dementia. Their understanding of dementia’s challenges can avoid emotional crisis which itself can \textit{reduce psycho-social costs of dementia.}
Cost effectiveness

• *No extra cost was involved* for reaching out to different age groups. *The limited number of manpower also reduced cost.*

• IAA was able to win the *cooperation of Education Board* who provided the personnel resulting in quick and easy feedback which is not normally possible.
Conclusion

• This project achieved an important result which was an estimate number of people with dementia in the selected district enabling Iran Alzheimer Association to present the case to the authorities indicating the need for establishing services like best practice care, support groups awareness raising sessions, etc.
Future Plan

• The numerous requests from children, families and teachers for more awareness raising sessions account for the success of the above project. More people contacted IAA for different services and volunteering. As a result, IAA now is planning to execute the project on a bigger scale in different districts of city of Tehran.