

Fathers' attitudes towards father-child interaction and how they interact with their children aged 2 - 2 ½ years in the home setting in the Puttalam District.

Perera, S.^{1*}, Hamsa, S.²

¹*Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

²*Speech and Language Therapist, Colombo South Teaching Hospital, Sri Lanka*

* smsiperera@gmail.com

Objective/s: The general objectives of this study were to describe fathers' educational level and socioeconomic status and their effect on their attitudes about father-child interaction, and the quality and the frequency of home-based language strategies used by them with their children aged 2 - 2 ½ years in home setting in Puttalam District. The specific objectives were;

To determine whether fathers' educational level affects their attitudes about father-child interaction and home-based language strategies used by them.

To determine whether the fathers' educational level affects the frequency of home-based language strategies used by them.

To determine whether fathers' socioeconomic status affects their attitudes about father- child interaction and home-based language strategies used by them.

To determine whether the fathers' socioeconomic status affects the frequency of home- based language strategies used by them.

Methods: A Quantitative Cross-sectional study design was conducted with 300 participants who were fathers of typically developing children aged 2 - 2 ½ years. Participants were recruited from MOH clinics in Puttalam District. Data collection of the study was done onsite through a self- administered questionnaire including 4 parts as family demographics, fathers' educational and socioeconomic status (SES), fathers' attitudes towards father-child interaction, and quality and frequency of father-child interaction. Data was analyzed using SPSS software.

Results: Most of the participants with good attitudes about father-child interaction are fathers aged 40-50 years and fathers whose educational level is from Advanced to graduate level. Most home-based language strategies are also used by fathers aged 40-50 but by fathers with educational levels below Advanced Level. A minority of the participants with good attitudes about father-child interaction are young fathers aged 20-40. Most participants in the self-employed sector have good attitudes about father-child interaction. Fathers who work less than 8 hours per day interact more with their children than fathers who work more than 8 hours per day.

Conclusion/s: The findings of this study conclude that the educational level and the SES of the fathers affect their attitudes about father-child interaction and the quality and frequency of home-based language strategies used by them. The findings describe that attitudes are 'good' when the educational level and the SES are high. But, the quality and the frequency of home-based language strategies are 'good' when educational level and SES are low. The age level of fathers directly affects their attitudes and usage of

home-based language strategies. The findings confirm that mature fathers have 'good' attitudes and high quality and frequency of home-based language strategies than young fathers. Furthermore, the findings describe that fathers' working hours per day affect their time of interaction with their children. It contributes to determining that the interaction time decreases when the working hours per day increase.