

ABSTRACT

The Child-to-child intervention project was an experimental one. It utilized a new approach that aims at improving the health and development of pre-school children from poor socio-economic backgrounds by working through the older sibling in the Primary School.

This intervention focussed on satisfying through education of the older sibling, two particular health needs of poor rural children - Dental care and Immunization. It also sought to improve child-rearing practices in the home with particular emphasis on play, toys, child management, the language "milieu" in the homes and the social interaction of parents and children.

The experiment has been evaluated at three levels, the school children, their guardians and the pre-school.

The data were analysed by computing frequencies of responses to the items comprising both the school children's test and the guardian's questionnaire before and after intervention. In the pre-school group means and standard deviation were computed for each variable. A 't' test was also used to establish the significance of any differences in the performance between Index and Control groups as a result of the intervention.

The intervention programme has demonstrated improvement in the guardian's knowledge and the school children's knowledge and practices in Immunization, Dental Care and Child Development. However, no improvement was observed among the pre-schoolers in the experiment.

The Child-to-child intervention is just one among others. It is hoped that the improvement in knowledge among the guardians and school children will mean that this approach can be utilized effectively to change knowledge and practices of the guardians and improve the health and development of tomorrow's children.