



3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NEUROSCIENCE AND PSYCHIATRY
NOVEMBER 16-17, 2023 | Dubai, UAE

Smart-apps on Mental Health Literacy for school teachers: A design and development study

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ABSTRACT

Background: There is a growing need for the promotion of Mental health literacy [MHL] especially among Indian school teachers due to the challenges they face in the teaching profession. Studies inform us that the lack of health information can potentially compromise an individual's ability in process of making informed health decisions and could adversely affect their health outcomes. In the booming digital era, smart-apps are seen as a potent means for delivering mental health-related interventions. The **objective** of the research was to develop a smartphone application for schoolteachers on mental health literacy to improve their mental health knowledge and help seeking behaviour. **Methods:** The study adopted the developmental research approach to analyze, design & develop, validate and evaluate the smartphone application. Need analysis was conducted in 5 schools with sample size of 94 school teachers to assess the feasibility of mental health smartapp.

In design- development phase nine teachers and eight mental health professionals explored the needs and framed the smartapp learning objectives and developed teacher-specific e-content (I-CVI value of 0.85, Lynn method). In Intervention-evaluation phase, pre & post-test design was adopted in which 26 teachers participated. The MHL questionnaires for school teachers and app utility feedback form, developed for the study purpose was used to assess the effectiveness of the newly developed smartapp. **Results:** Preference over the digital format was found high as 69% of teachers preferred digital over printed formats for mental health literacy. The evaluation results showed that after the usage of the newly developed smartapp for two months, majority of the participants 66 % had improved their scores on MHL. **Conclusion:** Apart from knowledge translation and reducing misconceptions, the smartapp enables the school teachers for basic self-screening on common mental illnesses and aids them to screen emotional and behavioral problems in children.



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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. J.S. Santhosh, is an Assistant Professor at School of Social Work, Kumaraguru College of Liberal Arts and Science, Coimbatore, India. He was awarded University Grants Commission-Junior Research Fellowship [UGC-JRF], New Delhi in 2016 to pursue his Doctoral degree in Social Work [Psychiatric Social Work]. He has research and training experience of 12 years and constantly working with the health resource groups across India in the thrust areas like Community action for health, Social determinants of health, Health system accountability, School Mental health and literacy. He has presented scientific papers on school climate and teachers' Mental health in National and International conferences in India and published over 6 articles in refereed journals and edited books. As a community mental health researcher, he has conducted a developmental research on designing and developing a need based mobile application to promote Mental health learning among school teachers. Bharathiar University on National Science Day- 28 Feb 2022, he was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation recognizing the copyright registered entitle 'MAHEAL- The Mental health Literacy Mobile Application for School Teachers'.

Dr. F.X. Lovelina Little Flower PhD, is the Professor and Head, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. Career spanning over 25 years of teaching and research in Social Work, her thrust area of work includes Mental Health, Social Work Education, Intercultural Social Work Practice and Geriatric Social Work. She has edited 4 books and has published over 35 research articles in leading National and International journals. She is an eminent speaker on Mental health and chaired sessions in various National and International symposiums and conferences. She has visited Umea University, Sweden under the Linneus Palme International Faculty Exchange Programme in 2006. In 2022, Bharathiar University awarded her with 1st position in research fund mobilization. She is the Principal Investigator of the ongoing research project "Depression among working women in India" funded by Dept. of Science and Technology, Govt. of India. At the University level, Dr. Lovelina facilitates various social initiatives of Govt. of India and Govt. of Tamil Nadu. She is currently posted as the Vice Chancellor Committee Member of the Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.



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