CrossMark

Commentary article

Information Typology among Children in Covid-19: A commentary

Hasan Ashrafi-rizi[1] , Zahra Kazempour[2]

[1] Medical Library and Information Science Department, Health Information Technology Research Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

[2] Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Media, Payam-e- Noor University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author
Hasan Ashrafi-rizi
Hassanashrafi@mng.mui.ac.ir

Abstract

The domain of children's health is one of the essential parts of the health system. In crises, one of the most vulnerable groups is children, and it is necessary to predict essential planning in advance to support them. Such programs need to be prepared to meet the many information needs of children in crisis; this information should be varied and tailored to the type of children's questions. In the Covid-19 crisis, children had different experiences as a sensitive group. They were forced to abandon many natural habits and activities and live and act with certain restrictions. These limitations themselves led to the formation of new information needs, as well as the typology of children's information. In this article, we try to describe and explain the authors' views about this type of information. Typology of children's information in crises helps professionals to identify the types of children's information needs and prepare themselves to respond to them. Besides, this typology helps researchers conduct new research. Furthermore, this diversity of information also helps educators, the media, and families to respond to children's questions appropriately during crises; because these questions are natural.

Introduction

UNICEF says half of the world's population consists of children, so children are one of the most vulnerable groups in crises, and they need special attention (1); because crises produce stress, violence, suicide, and mental health problems (2). In the Covid-19 crisis, children had different experiences as a sensitive group. Before the crisis, children usually lived in standard conditions; they went to school, kindergarten, and the park and had sufficient access to relatives and loved ones. Nevertheless, the situation changed by the onset of disease. They were forced to abandon many natural habits and activities and live and act with certain restrictions. These limitations themselves led to the formation of new information needs, as well as the typology of children's information. In this article, we try to describe and explain the authors' views about this type of information (concept, features, and examples).

Information typology

Scary information: It includes information that children receive through various individuals and media about Covid-19, which increases their fear and anxiety, such as the information of the deceased, the infected people, and the information

received through the parents' conversations those around them about this disease.

Curious information: Information that the child expects to be answered by those around them due to limited mental and physical space as well as the current situation; for instance, do children get Covid-19? When do kindergartens and schools open? And so on. Logical answers to these questions are called curious information.

Entertaining Information: It includes information that is provided in response to the child's needs for painting, making handicrafts, making toys, turning on electronic devices, and preparing all kinds of sweets, cakes, and all kinds of intellectual games, and so on.

Relaxing information: Any answer to children's questions about Covid-19, which reduces their anxiety and reassures children, is relaxing. For example, if we wash our hands or use masks, we will not get this disease. It includes information that calms the child down after hearing an audio story or a memory or humor.

Peers information: It contains information that, due to communicating with peers, increases and promotes social communication and eliminates the child's desolation during the crisis. Examples include getting information from your kindergarten classmates and exchanging information between children (phone, virtual), sharing movies, audio, and photos.

Vague information (unanswered): Questions that there is not any definite answer to them by parents or others during the Covid-19 period is called vague information (unanswered); For example, when exactly we defeat this virus when schools open when we can go to the park.

Forward-looking information: It includes information that helps the child to overcome the current situation and hope for the future. For example, What if kindergartens closed forever? What if I can see the kindergarten teacher again later? Furthermore, what if we can go camping with our friends later? The valid information given in answer to these questions is called forward-looking information. For example, the virus goes away in a few months, and you can go to school or kindergarten and see your teacher and friends.

Educational Information: Information that helps children find their way into learning is called educational information, such as scheduling virtual education and doing homework in this period.

Supportive information: Any information provided to children through the family and relatives that give the child a greater sense of pleasure and reduces the amount of overall stress and quarantine pressure as well, and decrease the pressure on the family is called supportive information. For example, phone conversations of the child's grandparents, uncles, with the child can reduce the pressure caused by the restrictions.

Conclusion

Today, there is a branch of psychology called child psychology. This specialized view of children's domain is due to the importance of the child in a healthy family and society. In crises, one of the most vulnerable groups is children, and it is necessary to predict essential planning in advance to support them. Such programs are the readiness to respond to many of the children's information needs in crises; this information should be varied and tailored to the type of children's questions. Typology of children's information in crises helps professionals to identify the types of children's information needs and prepare themselves to respond to them. Besides, this typology helps researchers conduct new research. This diversity of information also helps educators, the media, and families to respond to children's questions appropriately during crises; because these questions are natural and need to be answered at the right time and place. One of the appropriate actions that the education system, the media, and libraries must consider to meet these needs in crisis is to increase public health knowledge, especially for parents, known as health information literacy. Health information literacy is a combination of health literacy and information literacy essential to today's life (3), especially to answer children's questions. Finally, it is suggested that experts further explore this typology, and based on the results of this article and other research, books need to write to meet the needs of children in crisis.

Acknowledgment

Conflicts of Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

References

1. Dehghan Farouji F, Kazemian P, Dehghan A, Beitollahi A. Children in disaster risk reduction programs "case study: Tehran''. Disaster Prev. Manag. Know. 2018; 7 (4):363-376. [In Persian] URL: http://dpmk.ir/article-1-160-fa.html.

2. Rajmil L, De Sanmamed MJ, Choonara I, Faresjö T, Hjern A, Kozyrskyj AL, et al. Impact of the 2008 economic and financial crisis on child health: a systematic review. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2014;11(6):6528-46.

3. Shipman JP, Kurtz-Rossi S, Funk CJ. The Health Information Literacy Research Project. J Med Libr Assoc. 2009; 97 (4): 293-301.