

## **Hygiene-related knowledge, attitude and practice: An imperative study among primary caregivers of the under three aboriginal children in Malaysia**

### **ABSTRACT**

Background: Parental and caregivers' hygiene-related knowledge, attitude and practice are compelling factors in the prevention of stunting and malnutrition among the aboriginal children in Malaysia, which are highly modifiable. This study was conducted to explore the knowledge, attitude and practice related to hygiene among primary caregivers of the under three aboriginal (known as Orang Asli) children community in Malaysia. Methods: A total of 166 primary caregivers of the under three children of the aboriginal community in Kuala Langat district, Selangor were recruited. Data related to caregivers', child's and environmental factors were collected using a validated and reliable questionnaire, with knowledge, attitude and practice being the dependent variables. IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0 was used to analyse the data. Pearson's correlation was conducted to identify the relationship between continuous data. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between knowledge, attitude and practice related to hygiene, as well as the predictors. Results: The mean scores for knowledge, attitude and practice related to hygiene were 6.91 (2.12), 23.67 (3.16), 29.97 (3.55) and 43.05 (4.41), respectively. Significant moderate positive correlations were found between attitude and hygiene practice ( $r = 0.445$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Self-efficacy was significantly correlated with attitude ( $r = 0.442$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and practice ( $r = 0.557$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), with every unit increase in self-efficacy will predict 0.281 and 0.536 increase in attitude ( $B = 0.281$ , 95% CI: 0.126-0.435) and practice ( $B = 0.536$ , 95% CI: 0.348-0.725) scores respectively. Conclusion: Moderate mean scores for hygiene related knowledge, attitude and practice were observed in this study, with self-efficacy being a significant predictor for both hygiene-related attitude and practice but not knowledge. The self-efficacy of the caregivers should be sustained through continuous health education and counselling, to ensure improved hygiene practice. Future related research should consider the mediating role of self-efficacy on attitude and practice.

**Keyword:** Aboriginal children; Attitude; Hygiene; Knowledge; practice; Primary caregivers