



Evaluating a Culturally Adapted Sleep Hygiene and Relaxation Programme for Mothers of Children with Disabilities in Kumasi, Ghana: A Mixed Methods Study of Maternal Stress

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Abstract

Mothers of children with disabilities in Ghana experience chronic stress, frequently compounded by poor sleep. There is a lack of culturally relevant, accessible interventions to support their wellbeing. This study aimed to develop, implement, and evaluate a culturally adapted sleep hygiene and relaxation programme for mothers of children with disabilities in Kumasi, Ghana, and assess its effect on maternal stress levels. A convergent mixed methods design was employed. Quantitatively, a pre-test/post-test single-group design measured maternal stress using the Perceived Stress Scale (n=42). Qualitatively, three focus group discussions (n=18) explored participants' experiences. Quantitative and qualitative data were integrated for analysis. Quantitative results indicated a statistically significant reduction in perceived stress scores post-intervention, with a mean decrease of 4.8 points ($p < 0.01$). Qualitative analysis identified three key themes: the value of peer support, the feasibility of integrating techniques into daily routines, and improved emotional regulation. Integration showed the social support component was as valued as the sleep techniques for stress reduction. The culturally adapted programme was feasible and effective in reducing perceived stress among participating mothers. The combination of practical sleep strategies within a supportive group context addressed key psychosocial stressors. Occupational therapists should consider integrating culturally tailored group-based sleep and relaxation programmes into community rehabilitation services. Further research should test the intervention using a randomised controlled trial design. Maternal stress, sleep hygiene, cultural adaptation, Ghana, children with disabilities, mixed methods, occupational therapy This study provides initial evidence for a low-resource, community-focused intervention model that addresses a significant gap in maternal occupational wellbeing within a Ghanaian context.

Keywords: *Maternal stress, Sleep hygiene, Sub-Saharan Africa, Mixed methods, Children with disabilities, Culturally adapted interventions, Caregiver burden*

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