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# Perceptions of family needs in mothers of children with physical disabilities

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## Abstract

One of the important factor to the compliance to disability of children is to determine the needs of the children with disabilities and their families. This study was designed to investigate the perceptions of family needs in mothers of children with physical disabilities. The study included 113 mothers of children with physical disabilities. The perception of family needs in mothers was assessed by Assessment of Family Needs- FNS developed by Bailey ve Simenson (1988). The data was evaluated by the Single Relation Variance Analysis, t Test, Scheffe Test and Pearson Correlation Test, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) packet programme. Education levels of the mothers showed difference on knowledge needs ( $F=5.999$ ,  $p=0.001$ ), support needs ( $F=3.759$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) and general needs ( $F=3.300$ ,  $p=0.023$ ) dimensions. Meeting the basic needs of the families may increase the quality of life of the mothers who are the active member of rehabilitation process and may also effect the rehabilitation process in a positive way.

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*Keywords:* Family needs, children with physical disabilities, special education, health sciences.

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## 1. Introduction

Families who have children with disabilities require support to gain ability of effective communication in their families. Families may experience problems in expressing the behaviours and the characteristics of their child to the other family members, neighbours, friends and teachers of the children. Especially mothers have great effort to get knowledge from additional sources. Families who have children with disabilities may also experience problems due to acceptance and compliance of disability, care giving, education, treatment and growth of the child and those difficulties may cause important issues, therefore some families require support at least like their children. Compliance of families to disabilities is not a short period beginning by the time when it is first learned but a life long period (Kobal, 1993; Seligman, 1997; Urhan, 1998). Services for the families should focus on the determination of the requirements of the families and thus selection and quality of the services can be provided. If the planned and applied programmes are not parallel to family requirements, the success of the programmes and participation of the families to those programmes are decreased (Akkök, 1984; Sucuoğlu, 1995). One of the important factors to the compliance to disability of children is to determine the needs of the children with disabilities and their families. This study was designed to investigate the perceptions of family needs in mothers of children with physical disabilities.

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## 2. Method

The study included 113 mothers of the children with physical disabilities whose ages ranged from 4-18 ages. In this study, General Information Form (GBF) were utilized to have general information about the children and their families. The perception of family needs in mothers was assessed by Assessment of Family Needs- FNS developed by Bailey ve Simenson (1988). After the FNS assessment; knowledge needs, support needs, requirement of telling the children condition to other people, financial needs, family functioning needs, general services and general needs scores were obtained.

The data was evaluated by the Single Relation Variance Analysis, t Test, Scheffe Test and Pearson Correlation Test, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) packet programme.

## 3. Results

42(37.2%) of children were girls and 71(62.8%) were boys with the mean age of 11.04±4.55 years. 54 (47%) of the children were attending to school (normal, coalescence and schools for children with disabilities) and 106 (93.8%) to special education centers.

Mean age of the mothers was 39.12± 7.23 years. Education level of mothers; 11 (9.7%) were not literate, 88 (77.9%) graduated from primary school, 10 (8.8%) from high school and 4 (3.5%) from university (Fig.1). 105(92.9%) of the mothers were housewives and dealing with their children. 96 (%85) of mothers had knowledge about the disability of their children.

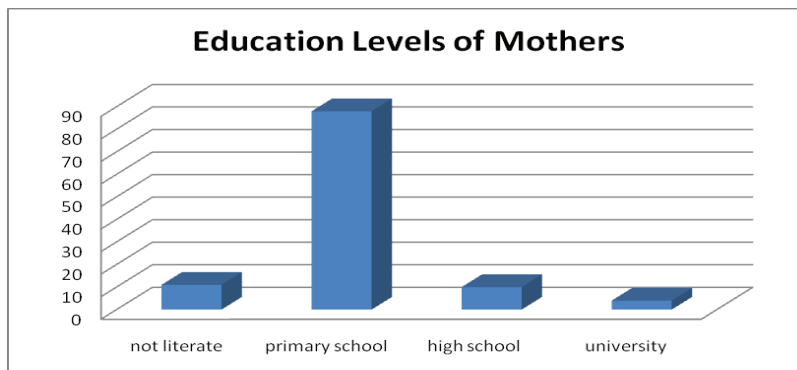


Figure 1. Education levels of mothers

Table 1. Mean scores of FNS of mothers

	X±SD	Min-Max
Knowledge Needs	17,38±4,30	7-21
Support Needs	18,01±4,17	8-24
Requirement of telling the childrens condition to other people	8,56±3,47	5-15
Financial Needs	11,52±4,08	5-15
Family Functioning Needs	7,73±3,34	4-12
General Services	8,80±3,07	5-15
General Needs	71,82±15,89	35-105

Education levels of the mothers showed difference on knowledge needs ( $F=5.999$ ,  $p=0.001$ ), support needs ( $F=3.759$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) and general needs ( $F=3.300$ ,  $p=0.023$ ) dimensions. A significant relation between the gender of the children and financial needs ( $t=2.809$ ,  $p=0.006$ ), attending school and general services ( $t=-2.714$ ,  $p=0.008$ ), family functioning needs ( $t=2.522$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) was found.

A positive correlation in between age of the children and knowledge needs ( $r=0.216$ ,  $p<0.022$ ); gender of the children and financial needs ( $r= - 0.258$ ,  $p<0.006$ ); occupation of mother and knowledge needs ( $r= - 0.243$ ,  $p<0.010$ ) and general needs ( $r= - 0.218$ ,  $p<0.021$ ); mothers education and knowledge needs ( $r= - 0.344$ ,  $p<0.000$ ); knowledge needs and financial needs ( $r= -0.219$ ,  $p<0.020$ ) was found.

#### 4. Discussion and recommendation

Primary purpose in the rehabilitation of children with physical disabilities are early education, intervention and guiding families. It is important to determine the needs of the families in order to provide inclusion, quality and methods of services. Meeting the basic needs of the families may increase the quality of life of the mothers who are the active member of rehabilitation process and also effect the rehabilitation process in a positive way.

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