

Factors related to children`s social interaction skills during the Movement Control Order (MCO) of the COVID-19 outbreak

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Acquiring communication and social skills takes place during early years of any individual`s life. Being a child born or, living the early years of life during the COVID-19 outbreak would mean that your social skills might be affected. Concerns about the impact on children`s social skills were raised when schools began closing due to the implementation of movement control order (MCO). **Materials and methods:** We did a cross-sectional study through a survey over a period of 3 weeks in January 2021. A set of pre-designed and validated questionnaires with 3 components, which identified parents` social interaction with children, children`s social skills in interaction with others and children`s social skills during MCO were applied. The questionnaires were distributed online through social media applications to targeted populations, who were parents with children aged 7-12 years old in Selangor. The final sample size was 157. **Results and conclusion:** Overall, 49.68% of the children showed good social interaction skills during school closure (online classes). Moreover, 52.87% of parents had average/poor level of interaction with their children. Children`s social interaction skills during school closure were significantly associated with the gender of the child (P value 0.03). Last but not least, Children`s social interaction skills during school closure were significantly associated with the level of parents` social interaction with children (P value 0.001). COVID-19 outbreak adversely affected many aspects of our lives. One important aspect affected was the social interaction skills of the school age children because of the communication restrictions. However, Parents can play a major role in improving the social interaction of their children. We do recommend parents to get enrolled in social skills classes or workshops to overcome similar social problems in the future.