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By Gayani K. P. De Silva & Devani S. Dissanayake
University of Colombo

Abstract- Parents remain as the gatekeepers in adolescents' lives and need to practice parental monitoring which provides awareness of their offspring's whereabouts, activities, and companions. The study aimed to explore the perception and experiences of parents about their monitoring practice of school-going adolescents in Kandy district, Sri Lanka. A qualitative study was done using twelve focus group discussions conducted using a semi-structured mediator guide questionnaire. Thematic analysis of the discussed data was performed. Schools in the Denuwara education zone, Kandy district. One hundred and seventeen parents of school-going adolescents (14 -16year) were included using the purposive sampling method. Twelve focus groups were formed with ten parents for ten discussions in each group and nine and eight parents participated for another two. Parents were informed via their schooling adolescents and received a participant information sheet which was completed and returned if they decided to participate in the focus group discussions.

Keywords: *parental monitoring, perception, experiences, adolescents.*

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Perception and Experience of Parents on Monitoring their School Going Adolescents– A Qualitative Study Conducted in Kandy District, Sri Lanka

Gayani K. P. De Silva [α] & Devani S. Dissanayake [σ]

Abstract- Parents remain as the gatekeepers in adolescents' lives and need to practice parental monitoring which provides awareness of their offspring's whereabouts, activities, and companions. The study aimed to explore the perception and experiences of parents about their monitoring practice of school-going adolescents in Kandy district, Sri Lanka. A qualitative study was done using twelve focus group discussions conducted using a semi-structured mediator guide questionnaire. Thematic analysis of the discussed data was performed. Schools in the Denuwara education zone, Kandy district. One hundred and seventeen parents of school-going adolescents (14 -16year) were included using the purposive sampling method. Twelve focus groups were formed with ten parents for ten discussions in each group and nine and eight parents participated for another two. Parents were informed via their schooling adolescents and received a participant information sheet which was completed and returned if they decided to participate in the focus group discussions.

Most parents understood it as an unintentional act by them while very few understood it as an intentional activity. Parents' perception varies based on their expectations and on the sex of the adolescent child as well as the parent. Relationship status, communication, and trust were the factors predicting parental monitoring perception of parents in terms of quality and quantity of monitoring practice. Experiences mainly described strategies by which parents monitor their adolescents which included communication with the adolescent child, gaining information by direct questioning from the adolescent child's friends or their parents and monitoring their adolescents by controlling their activities. Parents accept that their own childhood experiences play a major role in practicing monitoring as parents. Furthermore, they came across the barriers they are facing while monitoring their adolescents to the maximum.

Keywords: parental monitoring, perception, experiences, adolescents.

I. Introduction

Parents remain the most important figures in adolescents' lives. They use different strategies, styles, practices, and approaches with the key components of parental engagement such as monitoring, controlling, and communicating to support the development and maintain the health and wellbeing of adolescents. Parents need to practice a kind of parenting behavior that regulates and provides awareness of their offspring's whereabouts, activities, and companions. To know about adolescents' use of free time and the time that they are spending outside the house without the presence of their parents, the functioning of this hypothetical construct called "parental monitoring" by the parents is important. It is also a major determinant of good quality parent-adolescent relationships and vice versa (Borawski et al., 2003)and is a main domain of parenting (Strunin et al., 2015).

Parents are the main gatekeepers of their adolescents' lives, as they engage in many outdoor activities with strangers experiencing new challenges. As children grow older, however, parents become less likely to engage in looking and being more concerned about their adolescent kids than before. Monitoring is often highlighted as a preventional intervention strategy employed by parents to address the antisocial and delinquent behavior of their adolescent children (Laird et al., 2010). However, recent research work has broadened the conceptualization of monitoring to acknowledge both parents' and adolescents' contributions to the monitoring process. Even though the parental monitoring construct develops as a bidirectional concept where both adolescents and parents involve actively, it is important to assess parental monitoring perception separately. While many studies of parental monitoring assess how much adolescents perceive that they are monitored by their parent(s), only some assess how much parents perceive that they monitor their children qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The vast majority of studies on parental monitoring are quantitative by nature, which leads to a lack of in depth understanding of how parents define and perform their role as important agents in this area. Parental monitoring can also be bifurcated into monitoring by each parent (e.g., maternal and paternal monitoring activities in heterosexual couples), in which

Corresponding Author α: Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. e-mail: pmkg8276@gmail.com
Author σ: Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

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children and/or parents rate the level of monitoring in which each parent engages.

Since the parent's role has been established as an important aspect of parental monitoring, it is important to explore parental perception and share their experiences aiming to identify and evaluate the facts on parental monitoring in the study's cultural context. Sri Lanka has been considered as having a family-based culture in which the parent's role has considered as a significant factor in one's life and this culture accepts and considers an adolescent as a child even if they are moving forward with their physical, psychological, and social developments with seeking more and more independence and autonomy. However, the busy lifestyle of parents has led to lesser involvement with adolescents in the recent past and also the risk behavior involvement among Sri Lankan adolescents has shown a tremendous increase during the last decade. Many studies have been done to identify factors that lead adolescents' behavior to risks and to explore concepts needed in the prevention of risk behavior involvement of the adolescents other than many of the parenting behaviors and parents' involvement.

Parental monitoring also has not been explored in detail in the Sri Lankan context, even though this has been identified as a much important concept worldwide focusing positively towards healthier adolescents with minimizing adolescents' involvement in risk behaviors. Furthermore, exploring the content of parental monitoring through identifying true perceptions and experiences of parents will help to design effective parenting programs to promote better parenting as well as healthier adolescence through improving parents' monitoring practices.

II. Methods

A qualitative study was conducted through focus group discussions (FGD) with biological parents of schooling adolescents in the age group of 14 -16 years in Denuwara education zone in Kandy district. Qualitative exploratory approach is ideal in situations in which to no data currently exists as well as when researchers use a primarily inductive approach to explore a broad research area (Rendle et al., 2019). Ten FGDs were conducted with ten parents for each. For two FGDs, there were only nine and eight participants. Parents were informed through purposively selected schooling adolescents about their recruitment for the study. Either father or mother of selected adolescents was invited by key contacts (class teachers) to participate in the parent session. A parent with any severe psychological impairment for themselves or a parent with an adolescent with physical or psychological impairment and biological parent who is widowed or remarried were excluded.

Investigators developed a mediator guide to collect data following a thorough literature review and conducting discussions with experts from the fields of psychology, public health and sociology whose expertise lies in working with Sri Lankan adolescents. The mediator guide included an introduction for the discussion and a section with semi-structured open-ended follow-up questions addressing two main areas; parents' experiences and their perceptions on parental monitoring. To ensure integrity and trustworthiness, all the discussion questions were reviewed by a panel of experts. Pretesting and the content validity of the guide were assessed before using it in the study proper.

This study was conducted during the period from December 2019 to January 2020 and all FGDs were held at school premises in classrooms, on Saturdays. Discussions were conducted separately from each other using the moderator guide, by the principal investigator, who was specially trained in conducting FGDs and qualitative research. All discussions were held in Sinhala. One portion of the discussion was dedicated to exploring perceptions of monitoring and the other portion of the discussion was to share the experiences of monitoring behavior. The area of the discussion was changed in subsequent discussions to elaborate on the pattern of expressions of the participants. The duration of the parent's discussions varied from 60 to 90 minutes. An observer was also present during the discussions and took notes about the qualities of interactions between participants including any perceived power imbalances and participants' level of engagement. The verbal responses were noted down manually during the discussions by the observer and the discussions were tape-recorded with the consent of participants maintaining confidentiality. Special attention was given to prevent non-verbal clues through body language. Participants were given time to have interactions. In addition, they were encouraged to have a free flow of thoughts and tried to keep the discussion on track, drawing information from participants as much as possible, monitoring the length of discussion on particular topics and maintaining a neutral stance. Participants were given enough time to think as well. Probing was done as and when necessary until the participant ran out of new information to share.

Audio recordings with the use of notes taken during the discussions were transcribed verbatiminto Sinhalese and translated into English by a research assistant. Narratives written down were confirmed and corrected after listening to the recordings of the discussions repeatedly. Pseudonyms were assigned in the places of real names of parents to maintain the anonymity of the data. Transcripts and translations were checked with the original audio-recording by the principal investigator.

Thematic analysis approach was used for analyzing collected qualitative data through an iterative

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process of reading, coding, recoding and summarizing into themes manually. Transcripts were repeatedly read to prepare descriptive codes, which consisted of all emerging information with the key ideas and concepts expressed by participants. Descriptive codes with associated text segments were organized to identify common themes reflexively. Credibility was established by the two authors by comparing and verifying the theme construction, arriving int a consensus and by debriefing with a team of experts to provide an external check on the research process (Nowell et al., 2017).

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Ethical Clearance Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka before the commencement of the study. Administrative clearances were obtained from the Ministry of Education, relevant Zonal Directors of Education and school principals. All participants were informed about the nature of the study before the discussions through a description and a written informed consent document and all gave their consent to participate. Participants were advised that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their consent to participate at any time without penalty or explanation. Participants were also informed that confidentially would be maintained by the researchers.

III. Results

All parents (117) engaged in FGDs were Sinhalese (100%) while the majority of them were Buddhist (97.4%) Of the sample, many of them were mothers (63.25%) while only 28.2% of the sample represented working mothers. The age range of the parents was 29 - 63 years. Parents' mean age was 51.5 (SD = 5.69). Majority were over 45 years of age (78.63%). The educational level of the group varied from non-attendance to school to a diploma holder. Many of them (35.2%) have been educated up to G.C.E. Ordinary Level.

a) *Themes Emerged Regarding Experiences in Parental Monitoring among Parents*

Themes that emerged regarding perception about parental monitoring among parents were the understanding of parental monitoring by parents, expectations of parents about adolescent lives, the role of the sex and perceived factors affecting the amount and the quality of parental monitoring done by parents.

i. *Understanding of Parental Monitoring by Parents*

For most parents, parental monitoring was an unintentional act. They were describing their activities making them relevant to parental monitoring but without having the intention of practicing it. One parent stated, "I know almost all the things done by my child, about their tuition classes, where are they going and what they do almost all the time. So, I think it is a part of my day-to-day life activities. I have to get used to that, actually, we just talk about things, about her friends, and about her classes and we share the things we did when we were not together." There were few parents with reasonable understanding and they intentionally monitor their adolescent child throughout. One mother mentioned, "I'm practicing different ways since my child is a kid, to identify changes and issues with my kid. I am well aware that it is important to monitor my kid at this age period. I also think I know all the things about him. If we do it as a usual thing, we can monitor our kids even with our busy schedules." However, the majority of participated parents understood monitoring as an important act that makes adolescents prevent involving risky behaviors. A mother stated: "Yes, if we do not look into their day-to-day activities, of course, they will go beyond limits, they will have bad companions." A father made a statement-making that how sure he was doing things to prevent his son from experiencing risky behaviors, mentioning as, "If we ask and monitor their activities, and all about their friends, I'm sure that they will not face any risks in day to day lives." Again, he emphasized saying, "I can help him find his friends...I meant to identify good ones." Furthermore, some parents perceived a hierarchy of frequency of different parental monitoring skills and methods which will affect the seriousness of risk behaviors on different levels.

ii. *Expectations of Parents about Adolescent Lives*

Perception of parents about parental monitoring was identified into a theme where it describes how they were trying to fulfill their expectations of children or their willingness to make their children succeed in all aspects through parental monitoring practice. Some parents perceived monitoring as a thought of monitoring their child's academic work using different strategies. This fact ensures the statements made by mothers who stated, "I mostly monitor my kid's educational things. I think as I pay attention more and monitor his work only, he performs well" and "I have given him targets, I am monitoring him whether he is achieving those targets and doing his work properly."Few parents were expecting that their adolescent child should know good things and bad things and to know right and wrong. This was evidenced by the following statements made by a few parents. "I can track him to the best if I monitor him well" and "I don't want my child to behave badly which will make him feel embarrassed as well as I, being his mother."

iii. *Role of the Sex of the Adolescent*

Even though the parental monitoring concept was accepted as one of the important parenting practices by both mothers and fathers, there were differences in the level of responsibility that they thought of and had salient perceptions according to the sex of the parent. A father phrased that, "mothers should know in and out about their child's activities, where they are and with whom they spend time and mothers should

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know all his friends." Most fathers have given the responsibility to mothers saying that mother has to monitor their children. Even most of the mothers accepted that they are closer to their kids than their fathers due to many reasons and they are more capable of doing monitoring effectively. One mother mentioned, "I stay at home, I'm not working. So, kids are with me all the time and I always keep in touch with them. I ask and talk about their activities done outside the home than my husband."It was also revealed that parents have the perception of monitoring both their girls and boys in different ways. They came out with many different reasons such as cultural differences in how they accept girls and boys and different types and levels of risk exposures affecting both male and female kids. A mother stated: "I have a daughter; it is very easy to monitor them. She is so close to me and we are very comfortable talking about things any time." And a father stated, "I think boys of this age group are more inquisitive, they try to experience new things more than girls. So… we should monitor boys more". One parent came out with a phrase confirming this theme, "Our girls are more scared than boys. They expect our guidance more than our sons and they are reluctant to do bad things. So, we should do more monitoring on our sons."

iv. *Perceived Factors Affecting the Amount and the Quality of Parental Monitoring done by Parents*

Factors facilitating the monitoring of school-going adolescents appeared to dominate the discussion in most focus groups. Monitoring was perceived to be a constant challenge by parents, characterized by the need of balancing some often-discussed factors such as: maintaining an open relationship and good communication with their adolescent children and to make adolescents' trust over parents. Many parents perceived the good communication and relationship between them, and the adolescent child may improve as they ask and show concern about the adolescent's whereabouts, activities and companions. A mother stated "When asking things about their activities and friends, I 'm sure that they will feel that we care for them and we have concerns about them" and a father stated, "If we have a good relationship, like… if we can share things like friends, we can get information related to their activities and friends and we can more easily guide them. For that…I share my day-to-day work experiences with him. So that it develops a good relationship between us when we spend some time together, I have experienced that when I am doing so, he is also sharing his things with me."Many parents were worried about the trust that they accept from their adolescent children. This was shown from statements made by a few parents, such as, "We should ask things in a way that they feel we are friends, and not harming the trust that they have in us" and "As we have a good bond, I don't have to monitor him doing special things. I trust him and love him. Normally, as we share things in our lives, I feel that he trusts me so much as well."Throughout the discussion, parent-adolescent communication was identified and highlighted as it is coinciding with parental monitoring. A mother mentioned, "We both communicate frequently, we have time to spend with my child, so, it made it easy for us to share information… that I don't have to take special effort on monitoring."

b) *Themes Emerged Regarding Experiences in Parental Monitoring among Parents*

During analysis, statements were identified, compared and intergraded to generate a few main themes namely, strategies of parental monitoring, childhood experiences of parental monitoring and barriers experienced in monitoring their adolescents representing how parents experienced doing monitoring within the context of their life situations.

i. *Strategies of Parental Monitoring*

There are different methods mainly identified during analysis in which parents were practicing monitoring their adolescent children. Majority of parents have done monitoring by directly asking things from their adolescent children about their activity plans and things about their friends. Some of them reported the need to have direct interactions with their children's friends to monitor their adolescents. Many parents came to the consensus that their adolescents are under their control assuming that it helps to find out and to have an idea of things their adolescents was doing and where they are exactly when they are away from home.

ii. *Childhood Experiences of Parental Monitoring*

Parents came up with their childhood experiences while exchanging parental monitoring views. A mother stated, "I was so happy to be monitored by my parents… that I felt they have a concern for me. So, I think my daughter is thinking in the same manner… as she responds well when I ask things from her... I don't feel she is getting upset when I am questioning her about the places where she was or things about her friends."A different experience came from another mother mentioning, "I think they may not like it if we ask everything… I can remember that I was not that happy to tell all…even though I didn't tell much to my parents I didn't do bad things… so I think we don't have to ask all about them, any way we need to trust our kids."Quality and quantity of monitoring practice depend on parents' own childhood experiences of how they were monitored by their parents.

iii. *Barriers Experienced in Monitoring their Adolescents*

Almost all parents addressed barriers that they have experienced while monitoring their adolescents. They highlighted that they are not doing the monitoring of their adolescents properly as they have experienced those barriers while in the process. Having a busy life schedule among parents was discussed as a barrier to

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monitoring their adolescents during the discussion. A mother stated, "As I am a working mother, I have very little time to stay at home… actually, I do spend time even doing my work at home… that small-time period is much busier than my office time… I normally spent that short time helping my daughter to do her school homework". They shared experiences where responsibilities of monitoring are not being shared among fathers and mothers and parents are embarrassed about communicating with adolescents as barriers to continue quality parental monitoring. Statements made by the parents such as, "I think my wife should know all about my child…" and "I felt embarrassed in asking everything from my child… I mean about her friends all the time… I feel I am not that free for that" evidenced the above-mentioned themes respectively.

IV. Discussion

A qualitative research approach, rooted through an exploratory and descriptive research design was selected for this study to allow parents to freely discuss and share their experiences and to explore parents' perceptions of the monitoring process. This design was suitable as the study explored the contextual elements and experiences of parents' journeys through the monitoring process of their school-going adolescent children, and provided comprehensive descriptions of parents' experiences of monitoring their adolescents' daily activities, their companions and whereabouts. This method helped to study it in-depth and gave opportunities for participants to come up with their feelings. Of the available qualitative methods, FGD was used in this study as it is commonly used in social and health research to explore the perspectives of participants (Tausch & Menold, 2016). The group functions by encouraging the participants to comment, explain, disagree, and share their views. Thus, experiences were shared, and opinions were voiced that might not surface during individual interviews (O.Nyumba et al., 2018; Tausch & Menold, 2016). Hence, although it takes more time and effort to organize focus groups, and they cause greater logistical problems than individual interviews do, FGDs might generate more ideas about, and yield deeper insights into, the problem under investigation (Coenen et al., 2012). In-depth interviews were not considered here as they will not facilitate coming up with their feelings and opinion with straight forwarded questioning where again reminding experiences is much easier with sharing with others. When recruiting participants, diversity in their socio-economic backgrounds was considered to optimize the results of the study. A purposive sampling method was adopted to secure an adequate representation of all three school types in the study. The maximum sample variation allowed the space to gather different types of information about this topic.

Four broader themes identified in the perception of parental monitoring were the parents' understanding of parental monitoring, expectations of parents in relation to adolescent lives, the role of sex on parental monitoring perception and perceived factors affecting the amount and the quality of parental monitoring done by parents.

Findings suggested that there be different understandings of parental monitoring among parents who participated in the study. Most parents were practicing it unintentionally. Some of them had no impression of the concept of parental monitoring but came out with activities that they were used to practice with their parenting roles which can be considered as monitoring their adolescent children unintentionally. Even though they behaved unintentionally, their aim was to reduce or prevent their adolescent kids from being involved in risk behaviors. This concludes that awareness about parental monitoring is rather a "grey area" that has not been established on its perfect understanding.

Parents had a perception that without parental monitoring their adolescents cannot achieve academic success and socially acceptable behaviors. Mostly these expectations were based on their own perception of prioritizing activities and thinking of the benefits, such as school academic work schedules and deciding on friends. However, parents generalized their perceptions on monitoring activities based on their expectations about age and sex appropriate and socially acceptable adolescent behaviors. Those expectations guide parental monitoring through enforcing rules and boundaries for adolescents' activities, whereabouts and companions. Parent's expectations have been raised as a theme in parental perception on monitoring practices with adolescent's free time use in a qualitative study done in Canada among parents (n=17) of adolescents aged 12–14 years using the interview methods. They also highlighted the expectations of parents are associated with establishing limits and control for adolescents' free time used for their activities. Once parents' parameters and expectations were covered, their adolescents were relatively free to behave under parents' guidelines (Hutchinson et al., 2003). However, this study covers monitoring of their adolescents on their expectations related to adolescent free time activities, the present study generally presents parents' perceived monitoring as one end result of their expectations.

The role of the sex of the adolescent child as well as the parents were identified as a theme that describes changes in parental monitoring perception of parents. Both mothers and fathers are perceived as mothers are mostly responsible for monitoring their adolescent children and without any opposition, many parents accepted that mothers do monitor their children as a routine practice than fathers. The same perception has been explored in a qualitative study done among 53

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parents of adolescents aged 7-12 years through interviews with parents. This study revealed that mothers often function as monitors, keeping track of changing schedules (Deborah & Brenda, 2010). Parent's gender role differences were also estimated quantitatively, presenting that mothers are generally more engaged in their adolescents' lives to have a closer relationship than fathers (Finkenauer et al., 2002). The present study further suggests that there may be differences in parental monitoring according to the child's sex. Parents perceived that they are monitoring their sons more than their daughters with the reasoning that boys are more involved in risk behaviors than girls. In contrast to this finding, Deborah & Brenda (2010) found out, that parents perceived that they monitor their girls more than boys in their study. This gender role difference in parents' perception of parental monitoring has been estimated by many other quantitative studies as well. Even in their assessments of parental perception, they have shown that parents perceived high level of parental monitoring about their girls than their boys (Chilcoat et al., 1996; Crouter et al., 1999; Richards et al., 2004) in contrast to the present study finding.

While exploring parental perception of monitoring, parents came out with many facts covering the theme of factors related to the quality of parental monitoring practice of parents. Of them, parent-adolescent relationships, parent-adolescent communication and trust were identified as factors that improve parental monitoring quality. Parents who participated had the perception that as they have high levels of the above qualities, they can practice a high level of parental monitoring. Deborah & Brenda (2010) also revealed that adolescent disclosure affects parental perception of monitoring which can be considered in line with parent-adolescent relationship factors revealed in the present study. Furthermore, they came with some other different factors, such as; parents' strategies for coping with adolescents, parental anxiety and parental morals as factors that change parents monitoring practice, which was not revealed in the present study.

Parents often described their experiences of an event or events and authors were able to combine those facts and emotions into a larger concept during analysis. Parents came along with different methods that they were using to know their adolescent child's whereabouts, activities and companions in different frequencies. The most commonly reported strategy was having good communication with the child. This came as events that parents experienced with adolescent self-disclosure by adolescents freely telling things about them as well as solicitation by directly asking questions about activities. Parents of the present study experienced both concepts together as a common strategy in parental monitoring. Furthermore, parents have experienced that only if they solicit information from adolescents, they may experience adolescent disclosure. So, parents highlighted two-way communication as an important strategy. Adolescent disclosure and parental solicitation have been frequently documented in the existing literature as two separate strategies. Disclosure has been connected with parental monitoring and subsequent incidences of risk behaviors (Margret et al., 2010). Crouter et al, revealed that mothers and fathers can sometimes rely on different sources for monitoring, such as disclosure and solicitation (Crouter et al., 2016). Even though good communication between parents and adolescents has been proven to function as a factor to obtain a high level of parental monitoring, the present study explored it as a parental monitoring strategy that parents experienced.

The method of monitoring through obtaining information from the kid's friends and their parents was similarly explored in a qualitative study done through FGDs conducted with Sri Lankan adolescents while studying parental engagement in adolescents' alcohol use, revealing that some parents agreed that they ask their adolescent's friends about things related to their child (Thanuja D.K., 2017). Further, this was comparatively similar to finding in (Bourdeau et al., 2011), in which they described similar strategies used to increase knowledge about their adolescent's friends. They obtained information from adolescents (direct interactions) as well as directly obtaining information from friends of adolescents who have been revealed in that qualitative study done among 173 parents of adolescents aiming to explore parental strategies for knowledge of adolescents' friends. Occasionally parents of that study have revealed obtaining information from parents of adolescent's friends as another strategy. Contacting parents of friends has been described there as a second-hand source of parental monitoring (Bourdeau et al., 2011). In contrast to these findings, in some studies parents were revealed to have obtained information on their adolescent's teachers as well as which was not a strategy that came from the parents of the present study (Crouter & Bumpus, 2001).Another strategy of monitoring practice identified in the intended study is by controlling their adolescent's activities and adding rules and regulations to their relationship with friends and whereabouts. Similarly, this has been explored as an important parental monitoring strategy while describing parental engagement in alcohol use among adolescents in Sri Lanka even though the study assessed the perception of adolescents (Rendle, et al 2019). Also, parental control has been identified to obtain information to prevent risk behaviors of adolescents, according to the qualitative analysis done among parents of adolescents in a rural area of the UK (Jigsaw, 2012).

Parents described their monitoring methods as reflecting on their past experiences and recalling their childhood experiences of being monitored by their parents. Many of the parents recalled their childhood

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experiences of being monitored came with positive feedback on monitoring outcomes and monitoring activities of parents may vary according to their own childhood experiences of parents. This fact was not revealed in existing literature, hence, cannot be compared.

The barriers that parents identified were parents working hours and schedules, the financial instability of the family and having a resistant adolescent who may create issues when trying to elicit information from them. Parents had to think about their routine again and again when describing experiences on parental monitoring. As this was the first study in Sri Lanka to explore this concept, the results of the present study cannot be compared. Deborah & Brenda (2010) presented their longitudinal quantitative study that seeks to identify barriers to practice quality parental monitoring among a cohort of working mothers. Their discussion explored as having different psychopathologies such as depression or stress and having self-regulation on relationships with adolescents make parents difficult to practice effective and quality parental monitoring of their adolescents. Maternal depression and being socially disadvantaged families with a poor academic status of parents and having low family income has shown as barriers to effective parental monitoring quantitatively by Chilcoat et al., 1996. This finding was hardly highlighted during the present study.

The findings from the current exploratory study are of relevance to professionals working with parents and adolescents in the fields who are acting towards reducing the risk behavior involvement of adolescents. Hence, improvement of awareness of parental monitoring and its practice among parents is recommended to be incorporated into the parenting programs as an important component in improving parent-adolescent relationships and especially as a strategy to prevent adolescent risk behaviors. Researchers may also plan to further investigate the influence of parental monitoring on adolescents' risk behavior involvement, raised by our incidental findings. Thus, exploring the ability of parental monitoring towards improving the parent-adolescent relationship and communication, which would ultimately lead to improving the well-being of adolescents.

V. Conclusion

A variation in parents' understanding and their attitudes about monitoring their adolescent child and different strategies used in monitoring by parents were noted, highlighting the use of monitoring strategy in minimizing adolescent involvement in risk behaviors by parents. Being a family-based cultural context, parental monitoring can be used as one important intervention in improving parent-adolescent relationships and commutation as well as minimizing risk behavior involvement in Sri Lanka, during the efforts targeting healthier adolescence.

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Contributors

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Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no competing interests to declare.

Ethics Declarations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (Research Project No.2019/EC/28). The authors affirm having followed professional ethical guidelines in preparing this work. These guidelines include obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining ethical treatment and respect for the rights of participants, and ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of participants and their data, such as ensuring that individual participants cannot be identified in reported results or from publicly available original or archival data.

Data availability statement

Data are available on reasonable request.

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