MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH DAY

2021

27th Batch

Organized by

The Department of Community Medicine

Faculty of Medical Sciences

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Held on 17/11/ 2021 from 1.30 pm onwards via zoom platform

Panel 01:

Non communicable diseases and Nutrition

Chairperson:

Group3-Knowledge and Attitude on Alcohol, Tobacco and other drug use and factors associate with knowledge and attitude among Grade 10, 11, 12 students in selected schools in Colombo and Kalutara districts
W.H.P. Amarasinghe, S.S. Danthanarayana, E.D.M. Panchali, C.W.I.V. Welathanthri, S.L.G.D. Samarathunga

Group4- Knowledge, practices and factors associated with knowledge and practices regarding micronutrients among mothers of children aged 2-5 years in preschools in the Western province.
D.J.A. De Silva, E.M.I. Bandara, F.I. Sahana, G.C.Nirmana, W.A.KusalRandika

Group8-Dietary Habits, Exercise Patterns & their Association with General Health Status of Advanced level students in Colombo district.
T.H. Gangodawila, K.M.K. Katugampala, T.M. Rupasinghe, D.C.K. Pathirana, N.A. Isurika

Group14-Proportion and associated factors of insomnia during pregnancy.

K.W.K.N. Kumarasinghe, L.G.R.L.K. Jayathilaka, G.S. Jayashani, U.C.V. Jayawickrama, N.P.T.S. Karunasekara

Group16-Clinical characteristics of patients and effectiveness in determining the risk of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea among patients attending the Specialized Sleep Clinic at Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka
C.J.K. Mudalige, K.A.K.S. Kaluarachchi, M.M.S. Perera, L.A.B.Lakpriya, S. Navaretnam

Group17 - Level of knowledge, attitudes, practices of cancer palliative care and their associated factors among nursing officers in Apeksha Hospital, Maharagama.
P.A.T.Madushan, P.A.N.C.P.Gunasekara, M.A.R.N.Munasinghe, A.A.S.Uthpala, N.S.Karunanayaka

Group 21-Knowledge and practices on diet and lifestyle in preventing cardiovascular diseases and its associated factors among adults aged 18 – 30 in the Colombo district.
R.A.P.D. Ramanayaka, N.H.N. Senatilleke, K.D.H.D. Premathilake, D.M.D.H.U. Dissanayake, W.K.M. Fernando

Group22-Knowledge, difficulties encountered by the patients and quality of life and their associated factors among Type 1 diabetic patients (above 18 years) at National Diabetes Centre – Rajagiriya
H.D.W.P.Hathurusinghe, M.A.I.Saranga, P.Mylvaganam, G.N.Nirmanie, C.S.Weerathunga

Group29 -Knowledge, attitude and practices on food labelling among grade 10-13 adolescents in selected government schools, in Colombo educational zone
A.W.P.M.L.S.B. Dangamuwa, W.A.K. Karunarathne, M.M.F.Rusta, H.C.P. Weerakkody, T.D.M.S. Seneviratne

Panel 02:

Infectious diseases

Chairperson: Dr. ShyaminiAdikaram

Group1-Sociodemographic, nutrition and health related factors associated with management of childhood Tuberculosis patients in Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka
K.P.K.C. Abeywardana, G.H.A.D.D.Kumara, Ms. B.M.T.P. Aberathna, Mr. K.G.P.Y. Shanuka, K.S. Gamage

Group 5 - Effect of COVID-19 on tea plantation owners in Balangodaarea.
C.M.C.S. Chandrasekera, L. Dharmalingam, P.K.C.H. Fernando, V.P. Gamage, A.V.S.Pramodya

Group7-Influence of preventive measures, awareness and attitudes regarding COVID19 on spread of respiratory infections among schoolchildren aged 15-19 years in the Western Province.
H.T.Galhena, K.R.T.Nirmal, M.G.K.H.Gamachchige, P.R.T.N.Paranavithana, R.Thadshayanan

Group 11-Knowledge, Attitudes, and Preventive Practices related to COVID-19 and Factors Associated among Nursing Students in Selected Provinces.
G. D. Gunasekara, W. B. Harshini, A. M. Jayarathna, S. Puvirajasingham, N. Tharshanan

Group12-Proportion and factors associated with treatment defaulting among tuberculosis patients attending the Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka
P.U.Jayawardene, R.A.K.G.Ranasinghe, J.P.S.M.Samarakoon, S.M.R.K.Samarasinghe, W.A.S.D.Madusanka

Group23 - Psychological stress and factors associated with psychological stress among preventive health care workers involved in COVID-19 prevention work in selected districts of Sri Lanka
D.M.S.Y Dissanayake, R.M.S.M Rathnayaka, K.R Perera, D.H.P Gamage, W.A.R.S Fernando

Group32-Parental knowledge on cervical cancer and attitude on their children receiving Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine among 10–12-year-old girls in Colombo district
N.N.M.Liyanage, W.G.M.Wathukara, T. Sinthuvarshy, P.M.Batakandage, B.M.L.M.Batugedara

Panel 03:

Patient safety,quality and Occupational health

Chairperson: Dr. ChandimaniUndugodage

Group10-Knowledge, Attitudes, and Factors Associated with Knowledge and Attitudes to End-of-Life Care among Doctors at a Tertiary Care Hospital in Colombo district.
G. G. N. T Gurullawala, K. M. T. M Konara, S. R. S. N Marthinu, V. P Samaranayaka, S.C Samarasinghe

Group15-Knowledge, Attitudes and factors associated with basic emergency management following road traffic accidents among Advanced level students in Colombo district.
N. G. D. L. Keerthi, T. D. T. Chandima, H. D. N. Mendis, W. D. M. Thathsarani, H. N. Yapa

Group18-Proportion of work-related health problems and their associated factors among teachers in selected schools of Western Province
K.A.Gurusinghe, L.H.N.Perera , S.R.S.K.Perera, S.M.D.R.Sangika, S.A.Saumya

Group 25 -Musculoskeletal disorders, their coping strategies and associated factors among information technology professionals in selected institutes in Colombo district
M.H.D.I. Dharmapriya, D.M.H.A.B. Dissanayake, S.L. Nanayakkara, W.M.R.S. Wijekoon, I.S.U. Rathnayake

Group 27-Proportion and factors associated with primary headaches among advanced level students in the Western province, its impact on their quality of life, and the methods of relief used.
D.G.D.T. Doluweera, B.Nanthakumar, K.G.O Vinoja, A.A.S.L Adhikari, K.D.S.Weerasinghe

Group 30-Knowledge attitudes and practices on the concept of Primary care on seeking health and associated factors among thegeneral public in Colombo and Gampaha districts.
D.G.U.S Dehigama, H.G.J.L Ratnaweera, P.D.S Silva, T. Vinurajh, W.V.N.W.H Weerasinghe

Group31- Knowledge and Attitudes on Basic Life Support and associated factors, among nursing students in selected nursing schools/nursing faculties in Sri Lanka
P. A. G. P. Thilakarathna, H. N. P. Wijesooriya, A. G. A. B. Jayasena, V. M. S. Thoradeniya, M. A. S. L. Munasinghe

Panel 04:

Mental Health and Adolescents

Chairperson:

Group 2-Perception on online teaching and its associated factors among secondary school teachers of National schools in the Colombo educational zone
O. Athulathmudali, A. R. Chandraratne, W.A.P.KIndeewari, R. Sentheepan, C.L Wickramasinghe

Group 6-Knowledgeand practices on food and drug allergies, attitudes towards home remedies for food and drug allergies and its associated factors among 18–30-year-old adults in Colombo District
K.A.T.S. Premarathne, D.M.U. Nimthara, W.I.G. Perera, M.M.U.U. Dias, M.D.A.D. Jayasinghe

Group9-Knowledge on Autism Spectrum Disorders among pre-school teachers in the Colombo district and factors associated with this knowledge
M. N. Perera, L.G.A.S. Gunawardena, W.A.C.Y. Premadasa, K.K.D.H.M. Fernando, D.I. Gunawardana

Group 13- Knowledge, Attitudes and Factors Associated with Knowledge and Attitudes on Down syndrome Among Students Attending Selected Higher Educational Institutions in the Colombo District.
A.S. Kottahachchi, P.I. Suriyaarachchi, R.L.P Rangana, B.K.M.V. Kithma, R.A. Karikalan

Group 19-knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding insect sting among advanced level students in central province
Y. Lambhotharan, N. K. Kariyawasam, W. N. K. Premathilake, N. S. Warnakulasuriya, S. P. Weerakkodi

Group20-Factors associated with Knowledge,attitude and practices of school teachers in handling Conduct Disorder in selected schools in Nugegoda MOH area,Sri Lanka
G. E. S. T. Elapatha, D. D. S. D. Kumarasinghe, N. B. N. A. K. Nanayakkara, I. J. Premawansha, S. A. P. Madushani

Group 24-Student's perception on the quality and satisfaction on online learning teaching methods and barriers for learning among A/L students in selected schools in Western Province
R.S.N.L.Rajakaruna, N.N.K.Nawalage, S.M.D.S.Ekanayaka, A.M.K.K.G.T.S.Bandara,

M.S.Zainab

Group 26- Reading Habits and Factors Associated with Reading among Grade 10-11 Students in Colombo District
G.S.W.S. EGunawardhana, W.S.S. Perera, S.Kokilan, H.N.D.Ranasinghe, K.L.F.Rusliya

Group28 -Knowledge, attitudes and consequences of corporal punishment among school students aged   15-19 and its associated factors in selected schools in Colombo, Gampaha and Kegalle Districts
K. Dhammearatchi, M.D.O. Fernando, G.C. Devruwan, P.A.A. Sandeepani, A.R.A.H. Ramzani

Panel 01:

Non communicable diseases and Nutrition

Chairperson:

Group 3-Knowledge and Attitude on Alcohol, Tobacco and other drug use and factors associate with knowledge and attitude among Grade 10, 11, 12 students in selected schools in Colombo and Kalutara districts
W.H.P. Amarasinghe, S.S. Danthanarayana, E.D.M. Panchali, C.W.I.V. Welathanthri, S.L.G.D. Samarathunga

Background: Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use is a huge social problem in Sri Lanka and also all around the world. These habits are starting mainly in late teen ages. Teenage school students are the main target group of these drug companies and drug dealers, due to they are more vulnerable group and emotionally unstable. But only very few researches were done in assess to knowledge and attitudes on drug use among Sri Lankan teenagers.

Objective: To assess knowledge and attitudes on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and associated factors on knowledge and attitudes among Sri Lankan teenagers, in Kalutara and Colombo districts.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among grade 10, 11 and 12 students in Colombo and Kalutara districts. Total sample size was 205 students. Self-administered online questionnaire was used as the study instrument, after obtaining informed consent. Data analyzed were conducted using SPSS software. Significance level was taken as p<0.05.

Results: Majority of the students were Sinhala Buddhists (92.7%). Mean age of the students were 16.29 years (SD ± 1.018). Almost all were stayed with their mother and father (89.1%). There were almost equal proportion of male and females (49.2% and 50.8%). Majority had good knowledge on alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and also overall knowledge on drugs. (87.3%, 86.4%, 83.1% and 86.5%). Majority of students had good attitudes on drugs (52.2%). There was not statistically significant association between attitudes on drugs and district of the school of the students. But there was statistically significant association between knowledge on alcohol and, family member consuming alcohol, (p=0.049) which is negative correlation. And also, there was statistically significant association between house hold

guardian of the student and attitudes on drug. (p= 0.01)

Conclusions:87.6% of students had good knowledge on alcohol, 87.3% had good knowledge on tobacco and 84.4% had good knowledge on other drug use. 87.4% of students had good overall knowledge on drug use.52.2% of students had poor attitude on overall attitudes toward drug use. There was a statistically significant association between alcohol consuming family member of student and overall knowledge on drug use. It reviled statistically significant association between staying with mother and overall knowledge on drug use. According to this study overall knowledge on drug use was good among many students but it has to be improved. Because of that awareness programs, school-based activities are useful for this. Children who lost their mother and/or father, are vulnerable to having drugs so these children have to be got much attention and have to be made action plan to protect them by children protection authorities. Peer pressure is one of most important factors toward drugs, so parents and teachers has to pay attention on their children and students. Awarenessprograms on drug use for parents also has to be conducted.

Key words: *Knowledge on alcohol, knowledge on tobacco, knowledge on drugs, attitudes on drugs, teenagers, Kalutara, Colombo*

Group 4- **Knowledge, practices and factors associated with knowledge and practices regarding micronutrients among mothers of children aged 2-5 years in preschools in the Western province**.
D.J.A. De Silva, E.M.I. Bandara, F.I. Sahana, G.C.Nirmana, W.A.KusalRandika

Background: Micronutrients are essential for normal growth and functioning of children. Although they are required only in small amounts, the consequences of their deficiencies are severe, especially in children. As the primary caregiver of the child in most cases is the mother, they should have adequate knowledge on micronutrients to prevent children from developing micronutrient deficiencies.

Objectives: To describe knowledge, practices and factors associated with knowledge and practices regarding micronutrients among mothers of children

aged 2-5 years in selected preschools in the Western province.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study involving 200 mothers who have children attending preschools in the Western province were included via convenient sampling method. A self-administered Google form was circulated among mothers of children attending preschools via WhatsApp/Viber groups. Data collected were analyzed as percentages and their associations were established using chi square test and independent t-test from the IBM SPSS version 26 software. A p value of 0.05 was taken as the significance level.

Results: Mothers were the primary caregivers to their child among 74.5% of the study sample. A 57.5% had an average knowledge on micronutrients while 38% had a good knowledge with a mean score of 56.4 (SD =11.4). Of the sample 57.5% had good practices regarding micronutrients. The practice of micronutrient supplementation for the child is low (38.5%). There was a statistically significant association between the level of knowledge of mothers on micronutrients and age of mother, level of education of mother, total monthly income of the family and family and level of education of the primary caregiver (p<0.05). However other variables did not show any statistically significant association with knowledge or practices of mothers.

Conclusion: Most of the mothers had good knowledge about micronutrients. Knowledge regarding commonly deficient micronutrients among children (Vitamin A, Iron, and Iodine) was at a good level. Majority of mothers had good practices related to micronutrients. Micronutrient supplementation to the child is not a common practice among mothers. There was a significant relationship between the mother's age, mother's level of education, total monthly income of the family, level of education of the primary caregiver and mother's knowledge on micronutrients.

Keywords: knowledge, practices, micronutrients, mothers, preschool children

Group 8-**Dietary Habits, Exercise Patterns & their Association with General Health Status of Advanced level students in Colombo district.**
T.H. Gangodawila, K.M.K. Katugampala, T.M. Rupasinghe, D.C.K. Pathirana, N.A. Isurika

Background: Lack of nutrition awareness, poor eating habits and increased availability of unhealthy foods contribute as risk factors for the development of non-communicable diseases (NCD). Participation in physical activities plays an essential role in preventing NCDs and it is considered as a predictor of morbidity and mortality. Adolescents being at a developmental stage of life are required to maintain a good general health status and well-being.

Objective: To describe dietary habits, exercise patterns and their association with general health status of Advanced level students in Colombo district.

Methods: A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted using convenient sampling technique. Data were collected from 480 Advanced level students using a self-administered questionnaire which was prepared as a Google form. Three days dietary recall was used to assess dietary diversity using the food pyramid and the Dietary Diversity Score. Consumption of ≥4 from the six main food groups mentioned in the Food Based Dietary Guidelines, was considered as a nutritionally adequate diet. The International Physical Activity Questionnaire was adapted to suit our country and environment. Physical activities reported during a week by the students were classified as sufficient and insufficient according to WHO recommendations. BMI was calculated using height and weight reported by the students and categorized into different groups by the WHO criteria for Asians by the Regional Office for the Western Pacific Region. General health status and well-being were evaluated using the PedsQL 3.0 general well-being module, a validated questionnaire for the assessment of health status of adolescents. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 26.0. P value <0.05 was considered as significant. Chi square test and independent t test were used to find the associations

Results: Majority (n=245,51%) of the students had household income between Rs50,000-100,000. Weekly percentage of

students skipping breakfast (46.6%) was higher than the other two main meals. Consumption of ≥3 vegetables was 67.5% (n=324), ≥2 types of fruits was 30.2% (n=145) and consumption of at least one portion of proteins, dairy products and nuts and seeds per day were 71.7% (n=344), 25.8% (n=124), 21.3% (n=102) respectively. High percentage of starchy food consumption was reported for all three meals (n=466,97.1%). According to the Dietary Diversity Score, only 29 (6.0%) students consumed all six groups of foods per day and the students who had ≥4 was 243 (50.6%). Only 23 (4.8%) had consumed all six groups per day according to the food pyramid. Consumption of sweet items, savory snacks, fast foods/deep-fried foods ≥1 item per day was 341 (71.0%), 247 (54.5%) and 139 (31.7%) respectively. Daily water intake of 54% of the population was >2L. Only 15.1% (n=56) students of the study population had adequate physical activities during the considered week. Percentage of the students who had screen time for >3 hours per day was 69.2% (n=276) and 18.5% (n=77) had spent >12 hours per day sitting and reclining. Majority

(n=181,42.4%) were in the normal range of BMI. The percentage of students with a BMI of the overweight and obese categories were 14.8% (n=63) and 19.9% (n=85) respectively. Underweight students were 23.0% (n=98). Most of them (n=213,44.4%) indicated that their overall health status is fair. According to the general well-being score, 45.6% of the population had scored 76-100%. Only three students stated as '0'. Majority (n=340,70.9%) indicated that they have encountered at least one type of health condition.

There was a statistically significant association between the gender and the BMI, monthly income and the sufficiency of physical activities. The mean values of general health score obtained by the male and female students were 42.5 and 40.0 respectively. Income, meal skipping, and sufficiency of physical activities were associated factors for the general health status of the population. An association was also observed between nutritional adequacy of the diet and the general well-being.

Conclusions: Consumption of variety of food types and a balanced diet was very low, although the nutritional adequacy was satisfactory. High snack consumption was reported. Majority of the students did not engage sufficiently in physical activities although most of them had healthy BMI. Overall health status was fair, and the general well-being was in good terms. Income, meal skipping, and sufficient physical activities were associated with the general health status of the population and the association between nutritional adequacy of the diet and the general well-being was remarkable.

Keywords: Adolescents, Nutrition, Diet, Meal skipping, Exercise, Physical activities, Body mass index, General health status, General well-being, Diseases

Group14-Proportion and associated factors of insomnia during pregnancy.

K.W.K.N. Kumarasinghe, L.G.R.L.K. Jayathilaka, G.S. Jayashani, U.C.V. Jayawickrama, N.P.T.S. Karunasekara

Background: Insomnia is common during pregnancy but the proportion and factors associated of insomnia in Sri Lankan pregnant women are not well studied.

Objectives: To determine the proportion and factors associated of insomnia and to describe practices of using natural/home remedies for relieving insomnia among pregnant women in Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out, via Facebook groups created on pregnancy and data was collected by a self-administered questionnaire, using Google Forms. Questions were adopted from Stanford sleep questionnaire and insomnia was assessed using Insomnia Severity Index (ISI). The assessment of trait of worry were performed using abbreviated version of Pen State Worry questionnaire (PSWQ-A) and habitual sleep efficiency was calculated as given in Pittsburgh Sleep quality Index (PSQI). The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the associations were checked for statistical significance using Chi-Square test.

Results: Proportion of insomnia was 32.7%, while the proportions of severe,

moderateand subthreshold insomnia were 0.5%, 9.1% and 37.4%, respectively. The majority (70.5%) had subacute insomnia. The proportion of insomnia was 8.3%, 46.2% and 45.5 in first, second and third trimesters respectively.Statistically significant associations with insomnia were detected with age above 30 years (Chi.=5.701, p=0.017), increasing trimester (chi=12.202, p=0.002), obese BMI value at booking visit (Chi=9.913, p=0.019), low habitual sleep efficiency (chi=89.824, p = 0.001), and irregular sleep routine (chi = 52.102, p = 0.001). Also, comorbidities; back pain at night(p=0.048), difficulty in breathing at night (p=0.002), gastritis (p=0.007) and symptoms gastroesophageal reflux disease (GORD) (p=0.001) were identified to have significant associations. Higher trait of worry (chi. = 15.354, p = 0.001), nocturnal awakenings due to fetal movements (chi = 12.7, p = 0.001) and COVID-19 related limitations in the number of people allowed to accompany for delivery (chi=4.242, p=0.039) were also showed associations.

None of the women reported about ingestion or application of natural/herbal remedies for insomnia. Among women with insomnia, 31.8% listened to classical music, 63.6% engaged in religious activities and 14.4% practiced meditation to relive insomnia. Regardless of the presence or absence of insomnia, majority of the women preferred natural treatments over pharmacological treatments to help them sleep (62.1% of women with insomnia and 54.8% of women without insomnia). In all three insomnia groups, i.e., subthreshold, moderate and severe insomnia, the majority of women preferred using natural treatments 63.6%, 54.1%, 100% respectively, over pharmacological treatments during pregnancy for insomnia.

Conclusion: Insomnia during pregnancy was high. It was associated with several socio-demographic factors, several comorbidities, trait of worry and several factors on sleep, fetus and COVID-19. To relieve insomnia, several activities were practiced instead of ingestion/application of natural/herbal remedies. Their preference was more towards natural treatments over pharmacological treatments to relieve insomnia during pregnancy.

Recommendations: Characteristics of insomnia need to be addressed and screened during antenatal sessions with special emphasis. Also, pregnant women should be educated on prevention of insomnia, sleep hygiene and insomnia relieving activities.

Keywords: Pregnancy, Insomnia, Proportion, Prevalence, Associated factors, Naturalremedies,home remedies.

Group 16-Clinical characteristics of patients and effectiveness in determining the risk of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea among patients attending the Specialized Sleep Clinic at Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka

C.J.K. Mudalige, K.A.K.S. Kaluarachchi, M.M.S. Perera, L.A.B.Lakpriya, S. Navaretnam

Background: Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is a chronic disorder characterized by episodic upper airway collapse during sleep. Sleep disorders can cause an increase in health disturbances and financial burden. Despite the high prevalence of sleep disorders, a majority of mild to moderate cases remain undiagnosed. Although several studies have been conducted on factors related to sleep disorders, discrepancies still prevail on which dynamics predispose to OSA and how best to diagnose any sleep disorder accurately in a clinic setting. While a majority of the sleep studies have been conducted in African, American and Australian continents and some Asian countries like China and Singapore, only a few have been carried out in a South Asian setting. Evidently these countries have noticeable differences in terms of socioeconomic stability and lifestyle when compared to South Asian countries like Sri Lanka. Hence the question remains as to how far results of studies conducted in such countries are applicable to Sri Lanka. To relieve of this burden, this research was conducted to understand the presenting complaint, degree of daytime somnolence, sleep hygiene, comorbidities and diagnosing methods of OSA.

Objective: To describe the clinical characteristics and compare the effectiveness of the Berlin and STOPBANG questionnaires in determining the risk of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea among patients attending the Specialized Sleep Clinic at Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among clinic records of 101 patients aged 18-85 years who attended the Specialized Sleep Clinic at Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka from January 2019 to January 2021. Study participants were recruited using simple random sampling and data was collected using a pre- designed record sheet including questions concerning the participant's demographic and clinical background retrieved from the sleep clinic database. The risk of OSA was determined based on the comprehensive clinical assessment conducted at the sleep clinic. Inferential statistics was used to analyze associated factors using chi squared test for categorical variables and the t-test for continuous variables.

Results: Among 101 participants, 76.2% (n=77) had a risk of OSA. Among them, 50.6% were females aged between 41 and 55 years. A majority of those with a risk of OSA (n=69; 89.6%) and without a risk (n=16; 66.7%) had snoring as the initial presenting complaint with a statistically significant difference ($p<0.05$). Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS) assessing the degree of daytime

somnolence revealed that amongst those with a risk of OSA, 79.2% (n=61) had excessive daytime somnolence and it was significantly higher ($p<0.05$) than those without a risk (n=13; 54.2%).

The duration of sleep (Mean=7.19, SD=1.38) and awakenings per night (Mean 1.97, SD=1.64) was higher among those at risk of OSA than the rest although the difference wasn't statistically significant. However, the sleep latency was higher among those without a risk of OSA (Mean=29.83, SD= 34.84) compared to those without a risk (Mean=25.7, SD=32.29) without a statistically significant difference. Although a majority of the study population had hypertension as a co-morbidity (n=68; 67.3%), the prevalence of diabetes and obesity was greater among those with a risk of OSA (83.8%, 79.3% respectively) but the difference was not found to be statistically significant. 93.5% (n=72) of those at risk of OSA and 54.2% (n=13) of those without a risk of OSA had 2 or more categories of the Berlin questionnaire positive and as expected, the difference was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Nevertheless, among

those with a risk of OSA, 96.1% (n=74) had a STOPBANG score greater than 3 indicating a risk of OSA while it was 87.5% (n=21) among those without a risk of the sleep disorder without a statistically significant difference.

Conclusion: Snoring as an initial presenting complaint was significantly higher among those with a risk of OSA. They also had a statistically significant excessive daytime somnolence based on the ESS interpretation. Both the duration of sleep and awakenings per night was greater among those with a risk of OSA compared to those without a risk. Diabetes and obesity were more prevalent among those at risk of OSA. Similarly, the presence of 2 or more categories of the Berlin questionnaire positive was significantly higher among those with a risk of OSA than those without.

Group 17 - **Level of knowledge, attitudes, practices of cancer palliative care and their associated factors among nursing officers in Apeksha Hospital, Maharagama.**
P.A.T.Madushan, P.A.N.C.P.Gunasekara, M.A.R.N.Munasinghe, A.A.S.Uthpala, N.S.Karunanayaka

Background: Nursing officer, being the first contact of cancer patients, play a prominent role in providing palliative care. Therefore, having a good knowledge, favorable attitudes and correct practices improve the quality of service provided by nursing officers in uplifting patient's quality of life.

Objectives: To describe the level of knowledge, attitudes, practices of cancer palliative care and their associated factors among the nursing officers in Apeksha Hospital, Maharagama.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 252 nursing officers with more than one year of work experience at the Apeksha Hospital, Maharagama from October 2020 to June 2021. Socio demographic data, knowledge, attitude and practices regarding palliative care among nurses were assessed using a pre-tested self-administrated questionnaire after obtaining written consent. Accordingly, the variables were analyzed performing descriptive analysis and their associations were established using chi-square test from the SPSS software. $P<0.05$ was taken as the significance level.

Results: A total of 252 Participants, age ranged from 25 to 57 years, were completed the questionnaire. The mean age of the study participants was 32.48 (SD= 6.551) years. Among the study population, majority of the participants (59.5%) had good knowledge. Mean knowledge score was 26.4 (SD= 3.444). Majority of nurses (53.2%) had favorable attitude on palliative

care. Majority of participants (54%) engaged in correct practices regarding palliative care. Nurses more than 30 years, married and those who had more than 10 years' experience had significant association with knowledge (p<0.05). Those who had experience in caring for a dying patient had a significant association with practices (p<0.001). A significant association was observed between knowledge and practices in palliative care where most of the participants those who had good knowledge had correct practices (p=0.0000). Most of the participants those who had favorable attitude had correct practices making association of attitude and practices in cancer palliative care also statistically significant (p=0.0000).On the other hand, association of level of knowledge and attitude was not found to be statistically significant (p> 0.05).

Conclusion: Majority of the nurses had a good knowledge, favorable attitudes and were engaged in correct practices in palliative care. Having a good knowledge regarding palliative care and favorable attitude were positive factors for correct practices.

Key words: Knowledge, Attitude, Practices, Palliative care, Nurses, Cancer.

Group 21-Knowledge and practices on diet and lifestyle in preventing cardiovascular diseases and its associated factors among adults aged 18 – 30 in the Colombo district.
R.A.P.D. Ramanayaka, N.H.N. Senatilleke, K.D.H.D. Premathilake, D.M.D.H.U.

Dissanayake, W.K.M. Fernando

Introduction: Cardiovascular disease (CVD) has been identified by the WHO as one of the leading causes of death worldwide. When considering the burden of CVD in Sri Lanka, it has been estimated to be higher compared to other countries in the region as well as developed countries. Among the multiple factors that can be attributed to CVD risk, diet, smoking and alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and inadequate sleep play a key role. Healthy diet and lifestyle choices should be followed from younger age in order to reduce the risk of CVD. Although many studies have been conducted regarding secondary prevention of CVD among adults, research on knowledge and practices regarding primary prevention of CVD among adults aged 18-30 are lacking. The present study was aimed at bridging this gap, regarding knowledge and practices on diet and lifestyle in preventing CVD and its associated factors among adults aged 18-30 in Sri Lanka.

Objective: To describe knowledge and practices on diet and lifestyle in preventing cardiovascular diseases and its associated factors among adults aged 18 - 30 in the Colombo district.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 383 adults, aged 18 to 30 years residing in the Colombo district. Convenient Sampling technique was used to recruit study participants via widely used online platforms. Socio-demographic characteristics knowledge,

practice & factors associated in CVD prevention among the study population was assessed using a self-administered online google form. Socio demographic factors, diet and lifestyle related knowledge and practices among the study population were described by frequency distribution tables. Significance of associations was tested using chi-square test and the fisher's exact test.

Results: Total sample size was 383 with a 99.74% response rate. The age of the 383 participants ranged from 18 to 30. Majority of the participants (63.2%) had scored more than 70% and had a good overall knowledge regarding diet and lifestyle factors related to CVD prevention (mean score of 73.24% , SD-18.5).However, majority of participants were not aware of the value of fruit and vegetables (n=203, 53.0%) in protection against CVD .There was a significant association between good level of knowledge and good level of practice among the study participants (0.042).When considering the level of practice among the study participants, majority (53.3%, n=204) had an average level of diet and lifestyle related practice related to CVD prevention. Majority of the participants (60.1%) were not having adequate amount of physical activity even though they had a good knowledge (mean=85.5) on the importance of physical activity in CVD prevention. There was a significant association between the level of physical activity and increasing age (p=0.02), male gender (p=0.004), and highest educational qualification (p=0.022). One fifth of the study population (20.9%) were found to consume alcoholic beverages. There was a significant association between the level of practices with male gender (p=0.016) and the level of education (p=0.025). Tendency to smoke was significantly associated with male gender (p<0.01), age (p=0.046) and lower monthly income (p=0.047) while consumption of alcoholic beverages had a significant association with male gender (p<0.01) and highest educational qualification (p<0.01). There was a significant association between good level of knowledge and good level of practice among the study participants (0.042).

Conclusions: Majority of the participants had a good level of knowledge (63.2%) and an average level (53.3%) of practice. To improve the knowledge on healthy dietary habits for prevention of CVD, it would be beneficial to conduct awareness programs among younger population to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables. Policy makers should focus on preparing gender and level of education specific programs to introduce good practices to reduce the CVD risk since level of practice was found to be associated with the above factors. It was identified that practices in terms of physical activity in prevention of CVD among the study participants is low (mean=39.9) compared to other domains. Therefore, the importance of physical activity in the population should be highlighted and necessary facilities should be arranged by relevant stakeholders.

Key words:cardiovascular disease prevention, diet, lifestyle, knowledge and practices

Group 22-**Knowledge, difficulties encountered by the patients and quality of life and their associated factors among Type 1 diabetic patients (above 18 years) at National Diabetes Centre – Rajagiriya**
H.D.W.P.Hathurusinghe, M.A.I.Saranga, P.Mylvaganam, G.N.Nirmanie, C.S.Weerathunga

Background: Although there are many studies published in other countries, there is a scarcity of literature directly focusing on Type 1 diabetes mellitus in Sri Lanka. The disease affects the individual's day to day life style and brings about many physical, psychological, financial and social challenges.

Objectives: To describe the knowledge, difficulties encountered by the patients and determine the quality of life of Type 1 diabetic patients (above 18 years) attending National Diabetes Center - Rajagiriya and their associated factors.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 228 patients above 18 years diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, on treatment for at least one year duration attending National Diabetic Canter – Rajagiriya. Self-administered questionnaire was prepared and was circulated as a google form to the patients who were registered via email and WhatsApp. Telephone interviews were performed among those not having internet facilities. Descriptive statistics was performed and analyzed in percentages and their associations were established using chi square test from the SPSS software. $P<0.05$ was taken as the significance level.

Results Response rate was 70% (n=228). Majority (70%) were between 18-27 years, with a mean age of 25.54 (SD=5.690) and were unmarried. Disease onset was at less than 15 years of age among 82% of the patients. Mean Knowledge on insulin therapy was 67.76 (SD=0.49). Mean knowledge on acute complications was 42.92 (SD =0.5) and mean knowledge for chronic complications was 81.49 (SD =0.5) respectively. Overall knowledge, knowledge on insulin therapy and acute complications were higher among those educated above O/L and this was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Those who were unemployed had better knowledge on insulin therapy compared to those who were employed, and it was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Majority of the population (54.87%) had a good quality of life. The difficulties and life challenges were family issues (30.3%), physical (27.5%), psychosocial (20.6%), nutritional (16.81%), and treatment (11.8%) respectively. Better quality of life was significantly associated with monthly income over >Rs 25,000 ($p<0.05$).

Conclusions: Majority of participants had satisfactory knowledge on insulin therapy and chronic complications but poor knowledge on acute complications. However, those who were educated above O/L had significantly better knowledge on insulin therapy and acute complications. Majority had good quality of life and those with higher monthly income had a better quality of life. We recommend that

education and awareness is improved among these patients with regard to more specific issues related to T1DM and implement and strengthen social services to improve quality of life among these patients. Key words T1DM, QOL, Knowledge, Factors associated, Difficulties.

Group 29 -Knowledge, attitude and practices on food labelling among grade 10-13 adolescents in selected government schools, in Colombo educational zone

A.W.P.M.L.S.B. Dangamuwa, W.A.K. Karunarathne, M.M.F.Rusta, H.C.P. Weerakkody, T.D.M.S. Seneviratne

Background: To address the rising issues on non-communicable diseases and choosing healthy packaged food products, reading food labels plays a vital role. A highly vulnerable group for the buying harmful food products is the adolescents from which they gain various health issues. Hence discovering the knowledge, attitude, and practices on food labeling and to find the associations on practices related to food label reading has become a timely demand.

Objective: To describe the knowledge attitude and practices on food labeling and associated factors regarding practices related to reading food labels in grade 10-13 adolescents in selected government schools in Colombo educational zone.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among grade 10-13 adolescents in selected government schools in Colombo educational zone. Although initial sample size was 380, due to the issues related to COVID -19 pandemic sample size was reduced to 353. Non-probability snowballing sampling technique was used. Self-administered questionnaires (in all Sinhala, Tamil and English languages) were given to participants. Data was analyzed using SPSS software version15.0. P value of less than 0.05 was considered as significant.

Results: Out of the 334 participants, 51.5% (n=172) were female and majority (50.3%) were grade 13 students. Majority had a good knowledge on nutrition (53.2%, n=177) and on labeling (63.8%, n=213). Majority (52.9%, n-177) of the participants had satisfactory practices on food label reading. Practices related to reading food labels are significantly associated with (p<0.05) the educational level ($x2=7.044$; df=1; p=0.008), nutritional knowledge ($x2=9.603$; df=1; p=0.002), ethnicity of the participants (p=0.025) and the disease conditions of the participants [food allergies ($x2=3.837$; df=1; p=0.05), gastritis ($x2=6.478$; df=1; p=0.011)] or a family history of some diseases [cardio vascular diseases ($x2=4.182$; df=1; p=0.041)]. Majority of the participants (86.9%) agreed with "It is easy to understand the information in food label" and majority of the participants (76.1%) agreed with "Information on the food labels are trustworthy". More than half of the participants (63.8%) agreed with "Current labeling system in Sri Lanka is satisfactory".

Conclusions: Majority of the participants in our study sample had good knowledge about food labels and also majority of the participants had positive attitudes towards food labels regarding understanding, confidence and satisfaction. Having good knowledge and positive attitude towards food labels majority of the participants had satisfactory practices related to food label reading. It was found that satisfactory practices related to food label reading are significantly associated with ordinary level of education (O/L) than advanced level of education (A/L), lower level of nutritional knowledge, the students who are living with their parents/ guardian, ethnicity being Sinhalese and having the disease or a family history of food allergies, gastritis and cardio vascular diseases.

Key words: food labeling, knowledge, attitude, practices, Sri Lanka, adolescents, Associated factors

Panel 02:

Infectious diseases

Chairperson:

Group 1-Sociodemographic, nutrition and health related factors associated with management of childhood Tuberculosis patients in Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka

K.P.K.C. Abeywardana, G.H.A.D.D.Kumara, Ms. B.M.T.P. Aberathna, Mr. K.G.P.Y. Shanuka, K.S. Gamage

Background:Childhood TB remains to be a significant problem around the world. Even though Sri Lankan statistics still remains below the WHO global estimates of childhood TB cases due to the efforts made by the national program, childhood TB still remains to be a challenging health problem in Sri Lanka. So, this study was aimed to focus on the factors associated with management of childhood TB patients in Sri Lanka

Objective: The objective of this study was to describe the types, methods of detection and socio-demographic, nutrition and health related factors among childhood Tuberculosis patients and its association with the treatment adherence and outcome of childhood TB patients in Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted based on secondary data obtained from the patients' records of childhood TB patients at the Central Chest Clinic, Colombo, Sri Lanka. All the records of patients (n=96) <15 years and registered at the CCC between January 2019 to June 2020 were included and the data was collected using a structured checklist. Calculation of proportions, percentages were done using the SPSS software and statistical significations between associations were checked using Chi-squared tests.

Results: Among the 96 patients, Pulmonary TB (n=55,57.3%) was more common than Extra-pulmonary TB. Among Extra-pulmonary TB, most commonly involved site was lymph nodes (n=17, 41.5%), followed by pleural involvement (36.6%). Most were males (n=49, 51%), in the 0-4 years age group (n=44, 45.8%) and from urban areas (n=54, 56.3%). Low weight was found to be common (n=50, 52.1%) and most of them had a contact history with a

TB patient (n=53, 69.1%). Clinical diagnosis was done mainly based on symptoms like cough and fever, assessed by chest X-ray and Mantoux tests. Bacteriological methods such as Smear, Gene X-pert and culture was also commonly used. Out of the sample, 87.5% (n=84) had successfully completed treatment while no deaths were reported. Even though strategies such as DOTs and FDC were used to improve treatment adherence, there was no statistically significant associations between treatment outcome and any factor. However, the effect of nutritional intervention strategies carried out by the national program during treatment such as Thriposha supplements were found to be statistically significant in this study.

Conclusions: Childhood TB was more commonly seen in urban areas due to overcrowding resulting in increased transmissibility of the disease. Most of the patients had a contact history, which was a close adult from the family which suggests that adult TB cases should be managed properly as well. Nutritional interventions carried out during treatment was found to be effective for low weight which was commonly seen among childhood TB patients. Recording of DOTs and other monitoring strategies should be improved.

Group 5 - **Effect of COVID-19 on tea plantation owners in Balangodaarea**.
C.M.C.S. Chandrasekera, L. Dharmalingam, P.K.C.H. Fernando, V.P. Gamage, A.V.S.Pramodya

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic is the current global health crisis and the greatest challenge we are facing. With health impacts, access to healthcare services for other diseases too have been affected. It has had an economic and social impact across the globe. Tea plantation sector which appears to be one of the main contributors to the economy of Sri Lanka was significantly affected by the pandemic. So, it's important to study the effect of COVID-19 on the estate economy of the tea plantation owners. Tea plantation owners need to have an adequate knowledge of COVID-19 to ensure that preventive measures are undertaken at the tea estates to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the vulnerable tea workers who have a general poor health. So, assessment of

knowledge and lifestyle adaptations to COVID-19 among the tea plantation owners too is important.

Objective: Theobjective was to describe the knowledge on COVID-19, life style adaptations and problems encountered in patients with acute and chronic diseases during the lockdown among the tea plantation owners, in Balangoda area, Sri Lanka and their association with the effect on the estate economy.

Method: This study is a descriptive cross-sectional study, conducted among 85 tea plantation owners belonging to the Galgoda EKAMUTHU Small Tea Estate Development Society in Sri Lanka. A simple random sampling technique was used. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire containing four sections comprising of participant's sociodemographic and economic data, effect of COVID-19 on estate economy (during March to August 2020 compared to 2019), knowledge and lifestyle adaptations to COVID-19, acute and chronic diseases and problems encountered in those with diseases during the lockdown. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software. The significance level was set at 5%.

Results: Majority (56.0%) had a positive effect on the estate economy during March to August 2020 compared to 2019. Most of the participants had poor knowledge and lifestyle adaptations toCOVID-19 (50.6%). No significant association was found between poor knowledge of COVID-19 and poor effect on the estate economy due to COVID-19. The predominant acute disease reported was common cold (22.4%). The most prevalent chronic disease was hypertension (14.1%), and diabetes (12.9%). A majority of 61.9% of those with acute diseases experienced a negative effect on the estate economy due to COVID-19. Statistically significant associations were found between the presence of common cold (p=0.015), gastritis (p=0.040) and the negative effect of COVID-19 on the estate economy. Around 90.5% and 76.9% of patients respectively with acute and chronic diseases faced difficulties in accessing healthcare services. A statistical significance was observed between those with acute diseases who faced transport issues and the

negative effect of COVID-19 on the estate economy (p=0.032).

Conclusion: Even though majority of those with acute diseases and chronic diseases, who faced difficulties in accessing healthcare services had a poor effect on estate economy due to COVID-19, access to health care in terms of lockdowns should be made more operative. Knowledge of COVID-19 has been observed to be generally poor and thus needs to be improved.

Group 7-Influence of preventive measures, awareness and attitudes regarding COVID19 on spread of respiratory infections among schoolchildren aged 15-19 years in the Western Province.
H.T.Galhena, K.R.T.Nirmal, M.G.K.H.Gamachchige, P.R.T.N.Paranavithana, R.Thadshayanan

Background: COVID 19 is a highly infectious respiratory disease which was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. Since social distancing plays a major role in controlling the spread of this disease, it is worthwhile to assess the influence of long-term practice of these preventive measures on the incidence of other respiratory infections as well.

Objectives: To determine the influence of protective measures taken for COVID 19 on spread of Influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) among school children aged 15-19 years in Western Province and associated factors.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 387 school children aged between 15 to 19 years, who attended local syllabus tuition classes in Western Province. A self-administered questionnaire as a google form was used to collect data after informed written consent and the assent was obtained from participants. Snow ball sampling technique was used due to the current situation in the country with regard to COVID 19 pandemic. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the sample characteristics using SPSS software version 26. Chi- square and Fisher's exact test were used in determining the associated factors. P value of less than 0.05 was considered as significant.

Results: Among 387 participants, a significant female predominance (71.6%) was observed. Mean age was 17.81 years (SD=1.324) and majority (82.6%) had an educational level above O/Ls. Out of the study population majority had a good knowledge about COVID 19 (72%) and its symptoms (60.2%). Though 59.4% of participants had a good knowledge on ILI, majority of them (54.8%) had a poor knowledge on its symptoms. Internet (78%), electronic media (75.5%) and the social media (71.3%) were the most popular sources of knowledge among the students. More than half of the study population (60.2%) had a good awareness about the preventive measures of COVID 19 and influenza. Majority (73.6%) of the study participants were willing to get a vaccine for COVID 19 if it provided free. The main reasons given by the 26.4% of participants for being reluctant to get the vaccine were, uncertainty about the effectiveness (22.9%) and uncertainty about the side effects (38.6%). Equal proportions of our study participants had positive (50.6%) and negative (49.4%) attitude towards COVID 19 preventive measures. There was a

significant drop in incidence of symptoms of ILI in 2020 when compared to 2019. A statistically significant association (p<0.05) between the gender and the knowledge on COVID 19 was observed, as majority among females (58.5%) had good knowledge when compared to males (39.1%). The association between the gender and the knowledge on ILI was also statistically significant where majority of female students (56.3%) had good knowledge compared to male students (40.9%). However other socio-demographic variables did not show any statistically significant association (p>0.05) with knowledge. There was a significant association between age and the attitude towards preventive measures of COVID 19 and ILI as majority of students above 18 years of old (54.4%) had positive attitudes regarding preventive measures of COVID 19 and ILI compared to the students below 18 years of age (43.7%).

Conclusions: Majority of the participants had good knowledge in COVID 19, its symptoms and about ILI. However, most of them had a poor knowledge about symptoms of ILI. Though majority of the participants were willing to take a vaccine

for COVID 19, uncertainty about the effectiveness and the side effects were the reasons for most of the others' unwillingness to take it. A significant reduction in incidence of the symptoms of ILI could be seen in 2020 when compared to 2019. There is a statistically significant association between the gender and the knowledge on COVID 19 as well as on ILI. And it is observed that there is a statistically significant association between the age and the attitudes regarding preventive measures of COVID 19 and ILI.

Keywords: COVID 19, Influenza, awareness, preventive measures, attitudes, adolescence.

Group 11-Knowledge, Attitudes, and Preventive Practices related to COVID-19 and Factors Associated among Nursing Students in Selected Provinces.

G. D. Gunasekara, W. B. Harshini, A. M. Jayarathna, S. Puvirajasingham, N. Tharshanan

Background: TheCOVID-19 pandemic has exerted many disastrous effects on human life. At the time of writing this abstract, 3.92 million deaths have occurred worldwide. A significant amount of these individuals were healthcare workers and healthcare workers are also at higher risk of contracting the disease due to the nature of their work. These include healthcare students in training.

Objective: The objective of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitudes, practices related to COVID-19 and the factors associated with them, of nursing students in selected nursing schools in selected districts in Sri Lanka.

Method: A self-administered web-based questionnaire was distributed via email and social media to students registered in government nursing schools in selected districts using a snowball sampling method. The results were analyzed using IBM SPSS 26.0, also using tests of independence.

Results: Most of the participants were female (89.6%), Buddhist (94.2%), Sinhalese (98.7%), and in the 3rd academic year (63.6%). The most common information sources for knowledge regarding COVID-19 were social media (87.58%), television (84.31%) and government websites (58.82%). Majority of the participants displayed a good level of knowledge (61.7%), with a mean score of 69.90 (SD± 9). Majority also displayed a positive attitude (86.4%) and a good level of adherence to preventive measures (76.0%). The only factor associated with knowledge was income (p=0.048). The factors associated with attitude were formal COVID-19 training (p=0.003) and official website use (p=0.023). Factors associated with practices were academic year (p=0.011) and official website use (p=0.028).

Conclusions: Majority of the participants displayed good knowledge, attitudes and adherence related to COVID-19 preventive practices. It is recommended that the government and international health organizations address knowledge regarding treatment for COVID-19, preferably through establishing a reliable social media account or website.

Key words: *Knowledge; Attitudes; Practices; Adherence; COVID-19; Nursing Students; Sri Lanka*

Group 12-Proportion and factors associated with treatment defaulting among tuberculosis patients attending the Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka
P.U.Jayawardene, R.A.K.G.Ranasinghe, J.P.S.M.Samarakoon,S.M.R.K.Samarasinghe, *W.A.S.D.Madusanka*

Background: Tuberculosis is one of the commonest and the deadliest communicable diseases in Sri Lanka. Treatment defaulting results in adverse outcomes such as treatment failure and development of resistant strains.

Objective: The objective of this study was to describe the proportion of treatment defaulting and factors associated with it among tuberculosis patients attending the Colombo Central Chest Clinic, Sri Lanka.

Materials and methods: A clinic based cross-sectional study was carried out, extracting secondary data from 542 randomly selected medical records of tuberculosis patients registered at the Central Chest clinic for treatment in 2019. Both pulmonary and extra pulmonary tuberculosis as well as bacteriologically and clinically diagnosed patients were included. Exclusion criteria was records of patients with Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and who haven't completed treatment at the time of data collection. A data extraction sheet was used as the study instrument. Frequency distribution of variables were presented as percentages. Factors associated with treatment defaulting were analyzed for its significance using the Chi square test and 95% confidence interval.

Results: Study population included 68% (n=366) of males and 32% (n=172) females. Mean age of the patients was 48.89(SD+_ 17.9). Majority (83.8%, n=325) had educational qualifications below Advanced level. Most had pulmonary tuberculosis (82.0%, n=446), Treatment default rate was 20.7% (n=112).Being 30 years or more (OR=2.7, 95% CI=1.4-5.4), being male (OR=2.2,95% CI=1.3-3.6), Educational level of less than O/Ls (OR=3.0, 95% CI=1.2-7.2), being a past or present smoker (OR=3.1, 95% CI=1.9-4.9), past or present alcoholic (OR= 1.9, 95% CI= 1.3-3.1), and past or present drug addiction (OR=2.7, 95% CI=1.5-4.9) and having pulmonary tuberculosis as opposed to extra-pulmonary tuberculosis (OR=2.3, 95% CI= 1.2-4.4),increase the risk of treatment defaulting. and on the other hand, patients with a bacteriologically confirmed diagnosis

seems to be protective against treatment defaulting compared to patients with a clinical diagnosis (OR=0.6 95% CI= 0.4- 0.9)

Conclusions: Treatment defaulting is not uncommon among patients attending the chest clinic Colombo. Health care providers could pay more attention to patients with associated factors for treatment defaulting identified by this study to improve their adherence throughout the treatment course.

Key words:Tuberculosis, Treatment Defaulting, Factors associated with treatment defaulting, Adverse outcomes, Sri Lanka

Group 23 - **Psychological stress and factors associated with psychological stress among preventive health care workers involved in COVID-19 prevention work in selected districts of Sri Lanka**
D.M.S.Y Dissanayake, R.M.S.M Rathnayaka, K.R Perera, D.H.P Gamage, W.A.R.S Fernando

Introduction: With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka, a highly integrated disease prevention program was carried out combining the health sector together with law enforcement. Preventive healthcare workers were one such group of major frontline personnel who were engaged in this massive effort and their active involvement with the pandemic has affected their mental health tremendously.

Objective: To describe psychological stress, factors associated with psychological stress

and the coping mechanisms used to overcome stress among preventive health care professionals involved in Covid-19 prevention work in five selected districts of Sri Lanka.

Methodology: This descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 158 preventive healthcare workers (MOHs, AMOHs, SPHIs and PHIs) in Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Matara and Badulla districts of Sri Lanka. Participants were chosen using the non-probability convenient sampling method. Both web based and paper based methods were used to distribute the questionnaire among the participants. Kessler's Psychological Distress Scale 10 (K10) was used to determine the psychological stress which was one aim of study. Factors associated with psychological stress and the coping strategies used to overcome stress were also determined. Data was collected during peak of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka. The results were computed and analyzed through the SPSS software version 27.0. Associations of psychological stress with its trigger factors were analyzed by Chi square tests and comparison of stress levels between medical officers and PHIs was done using an independent t test.

Results: Among the respondents 57.6% were found to be psychologically stressed. Considering the associations between psychological stress and its risk factors age, presence of children, presence of pregnant women, work experience, perception on about being a front liner, availability of sufficient PPE, fear of transmission of

infection to their family, perception on current prevention and control strategies, perception on the co-operation from patients, perception on the feedback from the society and perception on the pressure at workstation were found to have a statistically significant association with psychological stress among the respondents. Conversely gender, marital status, presence of elders above 75 years, working hours per day, economic status, district of work, province of work, perception on support from family and peers and presence of chronic medical conditions did not show a statistically significant association with psychological stress among the participants. The commonest mechanisms that were implemented by the healthcare workers to cope up with psychological stress were maintaining a positive attitude to face the pandemic (77.7%) and analyzing the problems to understand them (70.3%). As a negative coping mechanism, a considerable proportion has expressed aggression towards family members. Nevertheless 5.1% and 8.2 % had been resorted to smoking and alcoholism and one person had been resorted to explicit drugs in order to cope up with stress. Only one person had consulted a psychiatrist/counsellor to overcome psychological stress.

Conclusions: The proportion of psychologically stressed participants of the study population was 57.6%. Among the factors associated with psychological stress age, presence of children, presence of pregnant women, work experience, perception about being a front liner, availability of sufficient PPE, fear of transmission of infection to their family, perception on current prevention and control strategies, perception on the co-operation from patients, perception on the feedback from the society and perception on the pressure at workstation were reported to have a significant association with psychological stress. Commonest positive coping strategy of stress was maintaining a positive attitude towards the pandemic.

Group 32-Parental knowledge on cervical cancer and attitude on their children receiving Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine among 10–12-year-old girls in Colombo district

N.N.M.Liyanage, W.G.M.Wathukara, T. Sinthuvarshy, P.M.Batakandage, B.M.L.M.Batugedara

Introduction: Cervical cancer is the second most common health problem among women globally and the third most common malignancy in Sri Lanka. Vaccination against Human Papillomavirus infection, which is the main cause for cervical cancer, is widely used as a preventive method in developing countries. In Sri Lanka, HPV vaccine was introduced into the National Immunization Program in 2017. Therefore, this study was carried out to assess the knowledge on cervical cancer

and attitude on their children receiving Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine among parents of 10–12-year-old girls in Colombo district.

Materials and methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 249 parents of 10–12-year-old girls in Colombo district. A self- administered online questionnaire (Google form) was distributed among WhatsApp groups of the parents through class teachers and the parents filled the questionnaire by themselves. Data was analyzed using SPSS software. P value less than 0.05 was considered as significant.

Results: Majority of the study participants were mothers (89.6%, n=223). Median age of the participants was 39.94 and most of the daughters of the participants (n=100, 40.2%) were eleven years old. Majority had a poor knowledge on cervical cancer (n=131, 58.7%) despite having a good knowledge on HPV vaccine (n=136, 76.4%). Majority of the respondents (n=111, 90.2%) were willing to vaccinate their daughters with HPV vaccine in the future. Total monthly income ($\chi2=8.164$, df=1, p=0.004), employment status of the parents ($\chi2=7.290$, df=1, p=0.007) and using Internet ($\chi2=20.888$, df=1, p<0.001), newspapers ($\chi2=7.861$, df=1, p=0.005) and awareness programs ($\chi2=11.918$, df=1, p=0.001) as sources of knowledge were significantly associated with knowledge on cervical cancer. No significantly associated factor was found regarding the attitude on receiving HPV vaccine.

Conclusions: Acceptance of HPV vaccine was high among parents despite the poor knowledge on cervical cancer. Monthly income, employment status of the parents and using Internet, newspapers and awareness programs as sources of knowledge were significantly associated with knowledge on cervical cancer. Measures to be taken to enhance the level of knowledge of parents on cervical cancer through Internet, newspapers and awareness programs. Further researches to be conducted at a national level regarding the attitude of parents and its associated factors on their daughters receiving HPV vaccine.

Key words: *Cervical cancer, Human Papillomavirus, HPV vaccine, knowledge, attitude, associated factors*

Panel 03:

Patient safety, quality and Occupational health

Chairperson:

Group 10-Knowledge, Attitudes, and Factors Associated with Knowledge and Attitudes to End-of-Life Care among Doctors at a Tertiary Care Hospital in Colombo district.
G. G. N. T Gurullawala, K. M. T. M Konara, S. R. S. N Marthinu, V. P Samaranayaka, S.C Samarasinghe

Background: End of Life Care (EoLC) is an important element in clinical medicine which is especially concerned with management of the terminally ill patients. When providing an effective EoLC to the dying patients, the knowledge and attitudes of doctors and their personal, social, religious and cultural, and legal barriers come into play.

Objective: To describe knowledge, attitudes, and factors associated with knowledge and attitudes to EOLC among doctors at tertiary care hospitals of Colombo district, Sri Lanka.

Study Design and Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 112 doctors working at tertiary care hospitals in the Colombo district. Only doctors who had primary decision-making responsibility in EOLC were included. The snowball sampling technique was used. A web-based, self-administered questionnaire was used as study instrument. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software (version 26.0).

Results: A majority of the participants had a good overall knowledge of EoLC (n=75, 67.0%), where most of the doctors scored well for the applied knowledge section (n=67, 59.8%), but scored less for the conceptual knowledge (n=84, 75.0%) and legal knowledge (n=63, 56.3%) sections. Mean knowledge scores were 49.33 (SD±22.123) for conceptual knowledge, 67.63 (SD±22.168) for applied knowledge and 59.38 (SD±22.791) for legal knowledge. Mean score for the overall knowledge was 58.78 (SD±14.706). With regard to attitudes towards EOLC, majority were in strong favor of including specific education regarding EoLC into the medical curriculum of Sri Lanka (n=78, 69.6%), multidisciplinary team approach to EoLC (n=74, 66.1%), and enacting laws regarding advance directives in Sri Lanka (n=61, 54.5%).

Both knowledge and attitudes had no significant association with age, gender, religion, specialty, current section of working, years of professional experience, prior education in EoLC, self-rated knowledge, and prior experience in EoLC. Also, there was no statistically significant association between attitudes and knowledge. But there was a significant association between designation and knowledge of EOLC (p=0.048). Medical specialists and senior registrars had the highest knowledge. Also, attitudes had a significant association with designation (p=0.038) and years of professional experience (p=0.004). Lack of prior

knowledge and skills (n=80, 71.4%), clinical decisions being challenged by the patient and family (n=83, 74.1%), unrealistic patient and family expectations regarding treatment (n=93, 83%), inability of terminally-ill patients to participate in treatment discussions (n=94, 83.9%), lack of documentation (n=89, 79.5%), communication issues (n=93, 83%), ambiguity of existing laws (n=88, 78.6%) and lack of proper legislations on EoLC (n=94, 83.9%) were identified as main barriers in providing EoLC.

Conclusion: Overall knowledge of EoLC was good among the doctors. Almost an equal number of doctors had positive as well as negative overall attitudes. Designation was significantly associated with both knowledge and attitudes. Years of professional experience had a significant association with attitudes. Prior experience with EoLC situations did not have a significant association with either knowledge or attitudes. Lack of knowledge and skills on was identified as a main barrier in providing EOLC.

Keywords: Doctors, End-of-Life Care, Attitudes, Knowledge, factors associated, barriers

Group 15-Knowledge, Attitudes and factors associated with basic emergency management following road traffic accidents among Advanced level students in Colombo district.
N. G. D. L. Keerthi, T. D. T. Chandima, H. D. N. Mendis, W. D. M. Thathsarani, H. N. Yapa

Background: Road traffic accidents (RTA) are responsible for approximately 3000 deaths and 8000 cases of severe injuries in Sri Lanka per year. Lack of time-sensitive basic emergency management (BEM) following the crash is one of the major reasons for casualties occurring in RTAs. Therefore, laypersons are liable to be in a position to provide life-saving and time-critical measures, especially in countries where ambulance and paramedical facilities may be suboptimal or inaccessible to many. Our study hopes to fill the gaps in awareness about, knowledge, attitudes and factors associated with BEM following RTA.

Objective: To assess the knowledge, attitudes & factors associated with BEM following RTA among Advanced Level Students in Colombo district.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among A/L students in Colombo district, Sri Lanka. The study population included 239 students aged 18 years and above, studying in English and Sinhala medium, for the G.C.E. A/L examinations. Self-administered questions were circulated as Google forms among A/L students via social media platforms using non-probability convenience sampling. The Google form consisted of four sections which acquired information about socio-demographic factors, knowledge and attitudes regarding BEM, and factors associated with knowledge and attitudes regarding BEM. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. P values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Results: Majority of the students (57.3%) had poor knowledge about BEM. The most popular source of knowledge was the television (59.0%). Majority of participants (79.5%) did not know the correct techniques used in CPR. Most of the study population (61.1%) had a poor attitude towards providing BEM. Most of the participants (64.9%) refused to assist victims of RTAs as they did not feel adequately trained to help. Most of the students (57.6%) preferred to undergo BLS/FA training at school. Almost half of the population (46.9%) had never received any training regarding BEM. There was a statistically significant association between knowledge and the students who had received training on FA/BLS (p= 0.001). A statistical significance was observed between the study stream and overall attitudes (p=0.020) as 86.4% of students studying Bio Science had an overall poor attitude. There was a also statistically significant association between knowledge and training on FA/BLS. (p=0.001)

Conclusions: Majority of the students had poor knowledge and attitudes about BEM. Most of participants refused to assist victims of RTA as they did not feel adequately trained to help. Although almost half of the population had never received any training regarding BEM, most of the students preferred to undergo BLS/FA training at school. These findings emphasize the requirement for interventions to be implemented to improve knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding BEM in RTAs.

Group 18-Proportion of work-related health problems and their associated factors among teachers in selected schools of Western Province

K.A.Gurusinghe, L.H.N.Perera , S.R.S.K.Perera, S.M.D.R.Sangika, S.A.Saumya

Background: The importance of the teacher in the educational process is unquestionable. In the school, a teacher's role is crucial. The teaching profession is characterized by high levels of stress and physical complaints. These occupation-related health problems affect the effectiveness of teachers influencing the quality of education.

Objective- To describe the proportion of work-related health problems (loss of voice, shoulder pain, neck pain, back pain, knee joint pain) among teachers and their associated factors in selected schools in Western province.

Method: A descriptive cross sectional study involving teachers aged 20-60 years old, who have at least one year work experience, were selected via convenient sampling from schools in Western province. Data collection for the study was carried out through a structured self-administered questionnaire as a google form that was provided to the participants via various online platforms, mainly WhatsApp and Email. Accordingly, the variables were

analyzed in percentages and their associations were established using chi-square test from the SPSS software version 26.0. P value less than 0.05 was considered as significant.

Results: 239 questionnaires were filled by participants. There was a significant female predominance among the study subjects (82.8%). Mean age was 38.17 years (SD= 9.014). Mean BMI was 24.78 (SD= 4.025). The most participants used private vehicles as their mode of transportation to travel to the school. Out of the study population, most of the participants have reported that they suffer from any diagnosed co-morbidities and 20.5% of them have respiratory diseases. Most of the participants use 2-inch heels as their type of footwear to school (42.7%). Majority (77.4%) reported that they have suffered from work-related physical discomforts after starting their teaching career. The common ergonomic problems teachers reported are leg pain (45.2%), vocal discomfort (42.3%) and back pain (33.5%). Most of the participants work more than 30 periods per week and most individuals reported to have more than 10 years of experience in teaching. Majority of the participants reported that they have to walk a long distance in a school day (63.6%), have to use stairs frequently (78.2%), have to keep their hand raised above shoulder level a lot (73.2%) and have to stand a lot during school

hours (89.1%). Most of the participants used blackboard to teach in the school. For neck pain, shoulder pain, leg pain and vocal

discomfort the mostly taken remedial measure is home remedies. For back pain western medicine and home remedial measures have taken in equal proportions. Most of the teachers participated in the study, conduct online teaching sessions using a laptop and most of them use a table to keep their device. The majority of participants experiencing leg pain were females (49%). Wearing shoes with high heel (P= 0.02) and walking long distances in a school day (P= 0.002) showed statistically significant relation with leg pain. There was significant association between vocal discomfort and using blackboards (p<0.05). Older age, BMI above 23, teaching experience exceeding 10 years, increasing number of working periods and walking long distances in a school day were associated with high prevalence of back pain (p<0.05).

Conclusion: Out of the study participants, majority had ergonomic problems and most of them were females. Remedial measures should be given to teachers to counteract these ergonomic problems which hider their teaching and thereby the quality of life.

Keywords: ergonomic problems, teachers, associated factors, remedial measures

Group 25 -Musculoskeletal disorders, their coping strategies and associated factors among information technology professionals in selected institutes in Colombo district
M.H.D.I. Dharmapriya, D.M.H.A.B. Dissanayake, S.L. Nanayakkara, W.M.R.S. Wijekoon, I.S.U. Rathnayake

Background: Musculoskeletal disorders are found to have an associated with ergonomics of individuals. IT professionals are a high-risk group MSD. In the backdrop of increased number of IT professionals work from home due to COVID-19 pandemic it is important to study about the musculoskeletal disorders among them.

Objective: To describe the musculoskeletal disorders, coping strategies and associated factors among IT professionals in selected institutes in Colombo district

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 386 IT professionals in selected IT offices in Colombo district using a pre tested self-administered online questionnaire. Information on musculoskeletal disorders and adapted coping strategies was collected. Individual and workplace factors which predispose to musculoskeletal pain were also identified through the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 26.0. P value less than 0.05 was considered as significant.

Results: Majority of the participants were in the age group 21-30 years and 45.4% were males. In the sample 33.7% (n=144) of the were found to have musculoskeletal disorders during preceding 12 months' duration.10.4% had MSD across multiple regions. MSD in axial body region (27.7%) was the most frequently. Only 14.7% reported any functional impairment in caring out daily tasks during past year due to MSD. Tendency to seek medical advice for symptoms were found to be low (17.4%). Stretching (56.3%) and postural changes (39.1%) were more frequent as behavioral coping strategies while use of cognitive coping strategies were less frequent. Longer work hours ($\chi2$ =39.387; df=1; p<0.001), poor posture ($\chi2$ =29.999; df=1; p < 0.001), incorrect computer screen positioning ($\chi2$ =20.554, p <0.001) and higher stress level of the individual ($\chi2$=0.05; df=1; p<0.05) found to have significant associations with the development of the MSD within the sample.

Conclusion: A significant proportion of IT professionals had musculoskeletal disorders. Lower proportions of significant functional impairment and lower tendency to seek professional medical interventions suggested most had milder events of MSD and accordingly they have been engaged more in behavioral coping strategies for their ailments. Work posture, computer screen positioning, longer work hours and higher stress level were found to be associated with the presence with musculoskeletal pain.

Keywords: Musculoskeletal disorders, Information Technology, IT professionals, Work related musculoskeletal disorders, coping strategies

Group 27-Proportion and factors associated with primary headaches among advanced level students in the Western province, its impact on their quality of life, and the methods of relief used.
D.G.D.T. Doluweera, B.Nanthakumar, K.G.O Vinoja, A.A.S.L Adhikari, K.D.S.Weerasinghe

Background: Primary headache is a group of disorders commonly affecting all individuals. However, numerous variations in the presentation, trigger factors, and therefore management exists in different geographical regions and demographics. The above aspects remain largely unexplored among Advanced Level students in Sri Lanka.

Objectives: This study aimed to determine the proportion of primary headache, its trigger factors and associated factors, its impact on the quality of life, and the methods of relief used among Advanced Level students in the Western Province, Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 441 students following the local Advanced Level curriculum and were residing in or attending schools in the Western Province. A non-probability convenient sampling method was adopted due to the practical challenges of approaching students during the COVID-19 pandemic. A pre-tested self-administered questionnaire was administered via online platforms. The questionnaire addressed socio-demographic, educational, anthropometric details, characteristics of headache, and trigger factors that contributed to it as well as methods of management utilized. The Headache Impact Test–6 scale was used to assess the impact of headaches on the participant's quality of life. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's Chi-square tests, Fisher's exact tests and independent t-tests were used in the analysis of data.

Results: From the total sample population, 75.3% experienced headaches during the past 6 months, while the proportion of primary headaches was 75.9%. The study sample consisted mainly of students studying in the biology stream (44.9%) and was almost exclusively living with their families (98.4 %). A majority of the participants were females (66.4%) and the mean age of the sample was 19 years (SD= 0.87; range= 16-23 years).

Primary headaches were found to be triggered by numerous factors related to food and beverages, environmental factors and lifestyle factors, from which stress (57.1%), prolonged screen time (52%), lack of sleep (46.8%) and studying (46%) were the most common. Gender ($p=0.011$) and the study stream ($p=0.032$) were found to have a significant association with the occurrence of primary headaches. Conversely, the BMI, financial status and the exam attempt had no association with primary headaches ($p>0.05$). According to classification of the impact derived from the HIT–6 score, 42.1% of the study group experienced a severe impact on the quality of life due to primary headaches. Taking a rest by lying down/sleeping (96%) use of ointments (87.3%) and medication (71.4%) were not only the most frequently employed methods of relief but were also the methods reported as most effective. Among those who obtained treatment, 51.6% had opted for over-the-counter medications over consulting a doctor (Western or Ayurvedic).

Conclusion: A high proportion of Advanced Level students in the Western Province are suffering from primary headaches causing a severe impact on their lifestyle. The female gender and the study stream were identified as associated factors with a statistically significant probability. Stress, prolonged screen time, lack of sleep and studying were the most common triggers of primary headaches. Most students opted for self-medication and home-based therapies over obtaining medical advice. In addition, covering other regions of Sri Lanka preferably with an interview-based questionnaire followed by a follow-up clinical examination will help to further improve the understanding of primary headaches in Sri Lanka while enhancing the generalizability and reliability of the findings.

Keywords: Primary headache, migraine, tension-type headache, cluster headache, screening, trigger factors, associated factors, relieving methods, quality of life.

Group 30-Knowledge attitudes and practices on the concept of Primary care on seeking health and associated factors among thegeneral public in Colombo and Gampaha districts.
D.G.U.S Dehigama, H.G.J.L Ratnaweera, P.D.S Silva, T. Vinurajh, W.V.N.W.H Weerasinghe

Background: Primary Care is the first contact and principal point of continuing care for patients within a healthcare system. It coordinates other specialist care that the patient may need, ensuring comprehensive health care. Many studies have been conducted in African Asian and Latin American regions which includes 3rd world countries where the primary care concept is yet in its fundamental levels of establishment. However very limited number of studies were conducted regarding primary care in Sri Lanka.

Objectives: To determine the knowledge attitudes and practices on the concept of 'Primary Care' on seeking health and associated factors among the general public in Colombo and Gampaha districts.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among the general population between 20 – 65 years in Gampaha and Colombo districts. Convenient sampling method was used to select subjects meeting the inclusion criteria until a sample of 319 was achieved. The inclusion criteria included participants living in Colombo and Gampaha districts for more than 5 years, participants with digital literacy and participants who are competent in English or Sinhala languages. The data collection instruments were pre tested, self-administered online questionnaires pertaining questions under socio demographic factors, other associated factors such as presence of long-term illnesses, health care insurance, knowledge, attitudes and practices on the concept of primary care. Data was analyzed using standard statistical package (SPSS). Quantitative data was described using frequency distribution and mean values. Qualitative data was presented using

percentages. Associations were assessed using Chi square test.

Results: Majority of the participants were between 20-34 years (70.5%). Mean age was 32(SD=.13.302). Most (71.2%) were females. Out of the participants 67.9% were unmarried. More than half of the population resided in Colombo district (57.1%). Majority had achieved an education above A/L (88.7%). Most of them had a monthly income of more than Rs.30, 000 (82.7%). Majority (80.3%) did not have any health insurance.

Overall knowledge on primary care was satisfactory (52%) among the study participants. The least known facility provided at primary care clinics by the community seemed to be psychiatry clinics (14.5%), Antenatal and postnatal clinics (24.6%), screening for Non communicable diseases (33.4%) and family planning (48.3%). While OPD treatments (63.4%) and vaccination facilities (52.4%) were known by the majority.

Most of the participants (73.9%) had their own family doctor or primary care physician. Majority of study participants (56.3%) seek secondary medical advice upon referral of a family doctor. Most of the participants (61.1%) stated general practice of a doctor as the closest health care providing institution while a very few participants (0.9%) stated government primary care unit as their closest healthcare providing institution.

The following were recognized as encouraging factors to visit a family doctor.

Satisfied with the services (94.1%), Close proximity to the house (85.9%), adequate consulting time (77.8%), affordable doctor fees (75.3%) and less waiting time (71.8%). Among the participants who did not have a family doctor and preferred going to a consultant specialist instead, believed that the consultant specialist (72.8%) has more knowledge than the family doctor. They were also worried about the unnecessary times spent at clinics waiting in queues (65%) and inadequacy of the consulting time duration with the specialist (59%) A significant association was found between presence of a family doctor with, gender (p=0.047) ethnicity (p= 0.016) and availability of health care insurance (p=0.001). There was also a significant association between educational level and the knowledge on primary care (p=0.017). There were no significant associations between age group, educational level, gender, ethnicity and satisfaction on primary care facilities.

Conclusions: The present study concluded that overall knowledge on primary care was satisfactory among the study group. Educational level was significantly associated with participants' knowledge on primary care. There seems to be an underutilization of public primary care facilities among the community due to unawareness and lack of public primary care facilities. Private primary care centers were popular and frequently utilized by the participants. It was evident that participants' practice on primary care concept had several mismatches when

comparing with the universal primary care concept. Thus, features such as continuity of care, health maintenance, first contact with the health system was lacking among participants practicing primary care.

Capacity of public primary care facilities need to be widened and made accessible to each and every individual in the community. Awareness programs should be conducted among people to educate them about the public primary care facilities available. Also, more family physicians qualified in providing comprehensive health care to families at primary care level should be incorporated into the system. This will enable to improve quality of the health care provided at primary care centers which will ultimately lead more citizens utilizing primary care.

Key words: Primary Care, family doctor, Utilization, Associated factors, Knowledge, Practice, Attitudes

Group 31- Knowledge and Attitudes on Basic Life Support and associated factors, among nursing students in selected nursing schools/nursing faculties in Sri Lanka
P. A. G. P. Thilakarathna, H. N. P. Wijesooriya, A. G. A. B. Jayasena, V. M. S. Thoradeniya, M. A. S. L. Munasinghe

Background: Basic Life Support (BLS) is a part of medical skills utilized in case of an emergency medical care to save human live. Provision of up-to-date information and skills training related to basic life support practices is very important for nursing students' professional development and practitioner and education related roles.

Objectives: To determine knowledge and attitudes in basic life support and associated factors, among nursing students in selected nursing schools/faculties in Sri Lanka

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among a convenient sample of 325 nursing students in Sri Lanka. The data collection was done using a pre-tested online questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed socio- demographic and academic program details. Knowledge, attitude and skills on basic life support and previous experiences on basic life support; Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used in data analysis.

Results: Among the total of 325 participants, 317 had given the consent. Among them, 46.4 % had good knowledge while 53.6 % of them had good attitude on BLS. The majority were females (89.3 %), Sinhalese (96.2 %) and Buddhists (91.2 %). Majority of the students were from nursing schools (63.7 %) and most were in 3rd academic year (45.7 %). Among the students 71.9 % had had lectures, 34.7 % had experienced and 40.7 % had participated in training programs related to BLS. Following factors were found to be significantly associated with good knowledge on BLS; district of permanent residence (p= 0.011), religion (p= 0.023), academic year (p= 0.011), having lectures on BLS (p=0.001), having past experience with BLS (p= 0.009) and having practical

training component in BLS training program (p= 0.010). Knowledge and attitude on Basic Life Support and associated factors among nursing students in selected nursing schools/ faculties in Sri Lanka. Following factors were found to be significantly associated with good attitude on BLS; religion (p= 0.027), district of permanent residence (p= 0.000), academic year (p= 0.003), having lectures on BLS (p= 0.046), participating in BLS training program (p= 0.001), having past experience with BLS (p= 0.033), having practical training component in BLS training program (p= 0.003) and time of last BLS program (p=0.005). Age group, gender, ethnicity and training institution were not found to be associated with either good knowledge or good attitude on BLS.

Conclusion:The present study concludes that 46.3 % of the study population were having good knowledge, whereas 53.6% of them were having good attitude on Basic Life Support. Associated factors with good knowledge and good attitude on BLS were; district of permanent residence, religion, academic year, having lectures on BLS, having past experience with BLS, participating in BLS training program, having practical component in the BLS training program and time of last training program. Including lectures, training programs with practical sessions on BLS in the curriculum of nursing students are recommended.

Key words: *Basic Life Support, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, Nursing Curriculum, training programs*

Panel 04:

Mental Health and Adolescents

Chairperson:

Group 2-Perception on online teaching and its associated factors among secondary school teachers of National schools in the Colombo educational zone

O. Athulathmudali, A. R. Chandraratne, W.A.P.KIndeewari, R. Sentheepan, C.L Wickramasinghe

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic led to a rapid closure of schools leaving online teaching and learning methods the only alternative to continue education. Owing to the minimum establishment of distance learning systems, this was a drastic leap to government schools. The need to assess possible online teaching methods, associated challenges and effectiveness of online teaching in schools became crucial.

Objectives: To describe the perception on online teaching and its associated factors among secondary school teachers of National schools in the Colombo educational zone

Methods: A descriptive, cross-sectional study was carried out to assess the aforementioned among secondary school (grades 6-13) teachers in National schools in the Colombo Educational Zone. Non-probability convenience sampling was used as the sampling method. The calculated sample size was 350. Accepting responses were halted at 368. A self-administered online questionnaire as a Google form was used as the study instrument initially. Eventually, due to the limited number of responses, hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software version 15.0. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Results: The highest used online teaching platforms for real-time teaching and for the purpose of sending messages/links to students, were Zoom (69.3%, n=244) and WhatsApp (96.9%, n=341) respectively. A considerable portion also used Microsoft teams (48.0%, n=169) and social media (65.3%, n=230) for real time teaching. In sending messages/links, Email was more popular than Google classroom. A majority of teachers were "Somewhat challenged" due to technical fluency (59.3%, n=207), connection issues (58.2%, n=203) and the lack of devices (57.9%, n=202). The extent

to which a teacher was challenged by their technical fluency had a statistically significant association with the teachers age ($\chi 2$ = 18.487[a, df] = 2, p< 0.0001). The mode of internet connection had a significant association with the extent to which cost of data was challenging ($\chi 2$= 5.459[a] df = 1, p = 0.019). However, it did not have a statistically significant association with connectivity issues ($\chi 2$ = 1.841[a, df] = 1, p = 0.175). Out of the respondents, 23.1% perceived online teaching to be less effective than face-to-face teaching while only 19.8% thought otherwise. This perception didn't seem to have a statistically significant association with the age of the teacher ($\chi 2$ = 0.769[a]df = 2, p = 0.681) or their gender ($\chi 2$ = 4.546[a]df = 2, p = 0.103).

Conclusion: Many teachers most commonly used Zoom and WhatsApp for online teaching. Many other online teaching platforms were used in varying proportions. A majority of teachers were "Somewhat challenged" due to technical fluency, connectivity issues and the lack of devices. While a certain percentage of teachers perceived online teaching to be more effective than face-to-face teaching, a higher percentage thought otherwise.

Key Words: *Online learning, Online teaching, Online teaching platforms, Perception, Teachers, Challenges, Effectiveness, Student interaction*

Group 6-Knowledgeand practices on food and drug allergies, attitudes towards home remedies for food and drug allergies and its associated factors among 18–30-year-old adults in Colombo District

K.A.T.S. Premarathne, D.M.U. Nimthara, W.I.G. Perera, M.M.U.U. Dias, M.D.A.D. Jayasinghe

Background: With the incessant advancement of industrialization and modernization, the whole globe is inevitably subject to experience a parallel rise in the prevalence of various types of allergies. Due to the instantaneous onset and repetitive and persistent nature of allergy, it may have a negative impact on the quality of life. Being responsible for the greatest proportion of the global allergy profile, food and drug allergy necessitate virtual interventions to raise awareness among general public. As Sri Lanka is no exception, it is a timely necessity to assess

the awareness among general population. Hence the population belongs to the 18-30 age group holds a dominant role over the society, their awareness is crucial for the well-being of younger children and senior citizens. Being the economic center and the most densely populated district of the country, Colombo district has been selected for the setup.

Objective: To describe the knowledge and practices on food and drug allergies, attitudes towards home remedies for food and drug allergies and its associated factors among 18–30-year-old adults in the Colombo District.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 400 adults aged between 18-30-years who were residing in the Colombo district at the time. Adults who were working in health sector and those who were unable to fill the online questionnaire due to connection problems were excluded from the study. Non-probability snowball sampling method was used to collect data. A pre-tested, feasible questionnaire in the format of a Google form was used as the study instrument. Collecteddata was analyzed using SPSS software (Version 26).

Results: Out of 400 respondents, majority (n=284, 71.0%) were in the age group of 18-24 years and mean age of the participants was 23.9 (SD ± 2.6). Most of the respondents (62.4%) hadn't ever experienced a food allergy and majority (69.8%) had a previous encounter with food allergic individuals. Majority (82.2%) of the respondents had never experienced a drug allergy and majority (55.4%) had no previous encounter with drug allergic individuals. Less than half (48.3%) of the participants had good knowledge on food allergy. More than half (54.3%) of the participants had good knowledge on drug allergy. Out of the respondents, majority (61.4%) had good practices related to food and drug allergies. According to the results, majority (54.4%) of the respondents had positive attitudes towards home remedies for food and drug allergies. Statistically significant associations were found between the knowledge on food allergy and gender (p= 0.016) and previous encounter with food allergic individuals (p= 0.001). No statistically significant associations were

found between the knowledge on food allergy and age, ethnicity, highest level of education, average monthly income, type of family and history of food allergy. Statistically significant associations were found between the knowledge on drug allergy and the highest level of education (p= 0.043), type of family (p= 0.004) and previous encounter with drug allergic individuals (p= 0.002). No statistically significant associations were found between the knowledge on drug allergy and age, ethnicity, gender, average monthly income and history of drug allergy. Statistically significant associations were found between practices related to food and drug allergies and gender (p= 0.006) and type of family (p= 0.008). No statistically significant associations were found between socio-demographic factors and attitudes towards home remedies.

Conclusions: Less than half of the participants had good knowledge on food allergy. More than half of the participants had good knowledge on drug allergy. Majority of the respondents had good practices related to food and drug allergies. Majority had positive attitudes towards

home remedies for food and drug allergies. Statistically significant associations were found between the knowledge on food allergy and gender and previous encounter with food allergic individuals. Statistically significant associations were found between the knowledge on drug allergy and the highest level of education, type of family and previous encounter with drug allergic individuals. Statistically significant associations were found between practices related to food and drug allergies and gender and type of family.

Keywords: *food allergies, drug allergies, knowledge, attitudes, practices, home remedies, associated factors*

Group 9-**Knowledge on Autism Spectrum Disorders among pre-school teachers in the Colombo district and factors associated with this knowledge**
M. N. Perera, L.G.A.S. Gunawardena, W.A.C.Y. Premadasa, K.K.D.H.M. Fernando, D.I. Gunawardana

Background: Autism spectrum disorders are increasingly prevalent conditions in the modern world in which early diagnosis and commencement of therapy is shown to be effective in the management of symptoms.

Preschool teachers can play an important role in the identification of children affected by ASD as symptoms start around the age of 3 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). However, limited studies have been carried out assessing the knowledge level of preschool teachers regarding ASD especially when it comes to the identification of children who may have the condition. We conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study to determine the knowledge level of 211 preschool teachers, who were selected using simple random sampling, in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka. Additionally, we have assessed their attitudes, sources of knowledge and the association between the knowledge and the sources of knowledge. We have also assessed the proportion of preschool teachers who have encountered a child with ASD. We collected the data using a self-administered questionnaire distributed through Google form.

Results and Conclusion: Majority of the teachers had a good knowledge level regarding the Signs, Symptoms, and identification features of ASD however, the knowledge regarding the risk factors was at an inadequate level. Seminars, books, workshops, and training programs on ASD and other developmental disorders were found to be the most effective sources of knowledge. Also, the teachers with a diploma which included developmental disorders as a component had a significantly better knowledge level than teachers who had not.

Keywords: Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Preschool teachers.

Group 13- **Knowledge, Attitudes and Factors Associated with Knowledge and Attitudes on Down syndrome Among Students Attending Selected Higher Educational Institutions in the Colombo District.**
A.S. Kottahachchi, P.I. Suriyaarachchi, R.L.P Rangana, B.K.M.V. Kithma, R.A. Karikalan

Background: Down syndrome (DS) is the commonest chromosomal abnormality causing intellectual disability and the leading cause of birth defects. Students attending higher educational institutions will be key stakeholders of the society. Thus, it is important to assess their knowledge and attitudes regarding people

with DS, as this would provide important information for planning interventions for their betterment.

Objective: To describe knowledge, attitudes, and factors associated with knowledge and attitudes on DS among students attending selected higher educational institutions in the Colombo District.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study among students in selected higher educational institutions in the Colombo district. Data was collected voluntarily and anonymously using a self-administered web-based questionnaire from 330 subjects.

Results: The study found that the majority (53.9%) demonstrated good knowledge and 50% showed positive attitudes. The majority knew that DS is a genetic disorder, is congenital and about the identification features. However, 29(8.8%) were not aware of a condition called DS. Knowledge on maternal age as a risk factor, screening tests done for DS during pregnancy and complications of DS were low. Improving knowledge on these areas would be

important as preventive measures. A majority believed that individuals with DS should live with family (81.2%), should receive education and involve in occupations. However, (44.3%) believed integrating them would increase accidents. Most (55.7%) decided that they would allow giving birth to a DS baby themselves and look after them. Attitudes regarding the sociability of individuals with DS were positive. The female gender, faculty/department, stream of A/L, and having a previous encounter with persons with DS showed statistically significant associations with knowledge ($p<0.05$). However no statistically significant association was discovered between knowledge on DS and having a close relative with DS. Only the stream of A/L showed a statistically significant association with attitudes and a significant correlation was observed between knowledge and attitudes.

Conclusions: Knowledge towards DS among students attending higher educational institutes in the Colombo District can be considered satisfactory. Only 50% showed desired attitudes. As this group would be an

important part of decision making in the country, interventions to improve their knowledge and attitudes may help for prevention of DS at many levels. However, the poor knowledge on association of advanced maternal age with DS can be overcome by raising awareness among public. Our findings suggested that who had educated in the A/L biology stream had better knowledge, hence marking the importance of including DS in the OL curriculum. Since there was a significant positive correlation between knowledge and attitudes, increasing of awareness in the community will contribute to an increase in positive attitudes towards individuals with DS.

Keywords: Down Syndrome, Down's syndrome, DS, young adults, knowledge, attitudes, factors associated, higher educational institutes, students, awareness, screening, genetic disorders.

Group 19-knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding insect sting among advanced level students in central province
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Background: Certain insects sting when threatened, these insect sting injuries range from localized swelling to anaphylaxis. Proper identification of these insects can prevent unnecessary encounters with them and proper practices when stung can make the difference between life or death. The problem is commonly encountered in the Central Province in Sri Lanka. Advanced Level (A/L) students represent a high-risk group and feasible to study. It is a timely necessity to assess knowledge, attitude and practices regarding insect sting among this group, as this would help to identify shortcomings.

Objective: To determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding insect stings among A/L students in Central province.

Methods: Descriptive cross-sectional study was performed by surveying the population using a textual and picture based online self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaire was provided in both official languages and link language. Snow ball sampling method was used. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software.

Results: A total of 288 participants completed the questionnaire. The mean knowledge score among the participants was 19.95 out of a total of 32. A majority (56.6%) of the participants had good knowledge. The mean attitude score among the participants was 4.92 out of a total of 8. A majority (56.9%) also had good attitude. The mean practices score was among the participants was 8.45 out of a total of 14

and 49.7% of the participants had good practices. Significant associations were found between subject stream of participants and knowledge and ethnicity of participants and attitude.

Conclusions: Although a majority of the participants had good knowledge and attitudes, they lacked practical and theoretical knowledge in certain critical areas such as identification of insects and prevention methods. Moreover, a majority of the participants had poor practices. Thus, interventions to improve the knowledge, attitude and practices of A/L students would be recommended.

Keywords: Insect sting, Allergy, Knowledge, Attitudes, Hymenoptera, Students, Practices

Group 20-Factors associated with Knowledge,attitude and practices of school teachers in handling Conduct Disorder in selected schools in Nugegoda MOH area,Sri Lanka
G. E. S. T. Elapatha, D. D. S. D. Kumarasinghe, N. B. N. A. K. Nanayakkara, I. J. Premawansha, S. A. P. Madushani

Background: Conduct Disorder (CD) is one of the most common psychiatric disorders among children and adolescents in the world. Apart from the child's caregiver, the teacher too plays a major role in the management of this disorder. Therefore, it is necessary for school teachers to have proper knowledge, attitudes, and practices in handling children with CD.

Objective. To describe the socio-demographic and teaching experience related factors associated with knowledge, attitude, and practices among school teachers in handling Conduct Disorder in selected schools in Nugegoda MOH area.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 188 school teachers, in selected schools in Nugegoda MOH area. The exclusion criteria included foreign teachers who worked at selected international schools and school teachers who were not conversant in English or Sinhala languages. The nonprobability snowball sampling technique was used. A self-administered questionnaire containing the four sections: socio-demographic data, knowledge on CD, attitudes towards children with CD and practices in handling children with CD; was sent to teachers via social media as a Google form. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 26.0. The significant level was set at 5%.

Results: Among the 188 participants, 111(58%) stated that they knew about CD but only 29(15.4%) teachers had adequate knowledge on CD. The factors: gender, marital status, number of children the teacher has and level of education of a teacher; had shown a statistically significant association with adequate knowledge on CD (p<0.05). Statistically significant associations were not observed between total period of service, grades and subjects the teacher taught with adequate knowledge on CD (p>0.05). Majority of teachers (68.1%) had unfavorable attitudes towards children with CD and only 60

teachers (31.9%) had favorable attitudes. Age group, number of children the teacher has, total period of service and grades they taught, had shown a statistically significant association with favorable attitudes towards children with CD (p<0.05). The factors: marital status, level of education, gender and subjects taught by the teacher, did not show statistically significant associations with favorable attitudes towards children with CD (p>0.05). Among the study population, only 49(26.1%) teachers had adequate practices on CD whereas majority (73.9%) had inadequate practices. The factors: number of children the teacher has and the grade/s they taught, showed statistically significant associations with adequate practices on CD (p<0.05). Gender, total period of service and level of education didn't show any statistically significant association with adequate practices on CD (p>0.05).

Conclusion: In this study, a majority of the teachers had knowledge on conduct disorder to some extent but among those teachers, the scope of knowledge was not adequate. Most of them had an unfavorable attitudes and inadequate practices in handling children with CD. Therefore, continuous professional education should be introduced to enhance knowledge, attitudes, and practices among school teachers on CD.

Group 24-Student's perception on the quality and satisfaction on online learning teaching methods and barriers for learning among A/L students in selected schools in

Western Province

R.S.N.L.Rajakaruna, N.N.K.Nawalage, S.M.D.S.Ekanayaka, A.M.K.K.G.T.S.Bandara, M.S.Zainab

Background: Nearly all schools in Sri Lanka had their first ever experience in delivering online education during Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, assessing student's perception towards online-learning & barriers is a timely need. In many countries, there were several studies done regarding online education, but very few studies carried out in Sri Lanka.

Objectives: To determine the student's perception on quality, satisfaction and barriers for online learning teaching methods among Advanced Level students in selected schools in Western Province.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 248 randomly selected Advanced Level students in selected government schools in Western Province. Data collection was done using self-administered, pre-tested online questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed socio-demographic information, student's perception on quality & satisfaction on online learning, factors associated with satisfaction & barriers of online learning. Descriptive statistics & chi-square tests were used in data analysis.

Results: Majority of the study population were Sinhalese (60.1%). Mean age was 18.41 years (SD = 0.747). Most of the respondents were females (65.3%). Most of the respondents were following biological

science stream (45.2%). Majority of the students were living in Colombo district (59.7%). The majority of the respondents had good quality of education and only 42.7% had good satisfaction. Almost all respondents could use learning apps (92.7%). Majority of the respondents had good internet connection (64.5%). The most common barriers were administration issues (89.1%) followed by educational difficulties (71.0%), technical skills (68.1%) and social interaction issues (64.9%). The following factors were found to be significantly associated with the satisfaction of online learning; course structure (p = 0.001), technological quality (p = 0.001) and student-instructor interactions (p = 0.001)

Conclusions: The present study concludes that half (50.8%) of the respondents had good quality online education while other half had poor quality online education. Fair majority (57.3%) of students satisfied on online education methods while others do not. Good course structure, good quality technological environment and good instructor student interaction are essential for student satisfaction. Education authorities, teaching-learning institutes, network providers and other relevant parties should address the barriers like law quality infrastructure, student-based problems, poor interaction between teaching and learning parties to establish a better online education environment.

Group 26- **Reading Habits and Factors Associated with Reading among Grade 10-11 Students in Colombo District**
G.S.W.S. EGunawardhana, W.S.S. Perera, S.Kokilan, H.N.D.Ranasinghe, K.L.F.Rusliya

Background: Reading habits play an important role in education as well as in personality development of an adolescent. Studying reading habits and their associated factors is important, as it provides the background information to support adolescents to build up a better nation.

Objectives: The study sought to describe the academic and leisure reading habits of grade 10-11 students and the factors affecting these habits. The study further describes changes in reading habits since grade 6-7 and factors affecting these changes.

Method: The data were collected from grade 10-11 students in the Colombo district studying for the G.C.E. ordinary level examination. A sample of 310 was received using an online self-administered questionnaire through the Snowball sampling technique.

Results: The study found that an overwhelming majority of students have a positive affinity (84.2%) towards reading and like to spend their leisure time reading (64.8%). The students tend to read more for academic purposes than for leisure. Their interest in reading is due to the inherent desire to learn about things they like (55.2%) and their genuine love of reading (61.7%). Printed reading materials were the preferred medium of reading (58%), fiction

was the most preferred reading material for leisure (84.0%). Male and Female students did not show any difference in preference of particular reading material (ex- fiction, non-fiction). However, female students showed more liking for fine arts, historical fiction, and fantasy genres. The majority of students had selected textbooks (87.3%) as their preferred reading material for academic purposes for which female students have a higher affinity. Students from higher-income families had more books at home and read for more hours for academic purposes compared to students from lower-income families. There was no such significant association with the time spent on reading for recreation. Peers who read have a positive impact on the reading habits of the majority of the students (55%). Parents' educational level and the presence of a reading adult were not found to impose a significant impact on the reading habits of their children. The impact of covid-19 on the students' reading habits seems to be miscellaneous, with a significant percentage of the students having reaped positive benefits while a lesser but a considerable number of students have experienced negative effects. A significant percentage of the students have reaped positive benefits during the pandemic period, a lesser but a significant number of students have experienced negative effects while some of the students have had no impact on their reading habits at all due to covid-19 confinement. Overall, the impact of covid-19 on the students' reading habits seems to be miscellaneous. Time students spend on leisure reading has gradually decreased as students advanced through the grades, and time spent on academic reading has increased. The increased workload was a major preventive factor resulting in the gradual decrease in leisure reading as per the opinion of the majority of students (58.6%).

Conclusions: Reading were found to be popular among grade 10-11 students, however, academic reading was widely practiced when compared to leisure-reading. Increasing accessibility of reading material through physical and on-line libraries across the communities with a wide variation may help improve reading among students.

Key words: reading habits, adolescents, school children, students, teens, library, covid-19

Group 28 -Knowledge, attitudes and consequences of corporal punishment among school students aged 15-19 and its associated factors in selected schools in Colombo, Gampaha and Kegalle Districts
K. Dhammearatchi, M.D.O. Fernando, G.C. Devruwan, P.A.A. Sandeepani, A.R.A.H. Ramzani

Background: Corporal punishment is the most widely utilized form of discipline directed towards children in schools. To correct or control a child's behavior, a teacher can use various methods of physical force, with the intention that a student would respond to the effects of pain caused by the punishments. The beneficial or harmful nature of corporal punishment is

debatable but its physical, psychological and social consequences are much evident in nearly all the cases reported locally and internationally. Its psycho-social outcomes in particular can have a long-lasting impact on a child's personality and growth towards adulthood. In light of these outcomes, it is of utmost importance to assess the students' knowledge and attitudes in the use of corporal punishment, to determine its effectiveness as a method of discipline in Sri Lankan schools.

Objective: The objective of the study was to describe the knowledge, attitudes and consequences of corporal punishment among school students aged 15-19 and its associated factors in schools in Colombo, Kegalle and Gampaha districts.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 245 school children aged 15-19 years attending government and private schools in Colombo, Gampaha and Kegalle districts in Sri Lanka. Due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, a study sample of 245 respondents was obtained through the convenience sampling method. Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26 was used for data analysis. $P < 0.05$ was taken as the level of significance.

Results: Majority of the study population had heard of the term "corporal punishment" (69.5%). While most study participants were aware that corporal punishment was illegal, an almost equal proportion of the population were not

(42.9% and 41.6% respectively). At least one form of corporal punishment was experienced by the majority of the study population (86.4%) during their school years. Kneeling and being told to keep standing/ standing on a chair were the most frequent methods that were experienced/witnessed by the majority (87.8%). Ear twisting was also commonly experienced by most of the students (86.5%). More than half of the study population had felt pain or physical discomfort after being subjected to corporal punishment (59.2%). With regard to the social consequences, 53.1% have believed that increased aggressiveness and rebellious attitudes can be an outcome of corporal punishment. Most of the students (60.4%) acknowledge that they have understood what they did was wrong after being punished. Majority of the students (76.7%) did not believe that corporal punishment is an acceptable practice and only 29% thought that it had a positive influence. Majority (N=216, 88.2%) of the study population prefers if teachers utilize alternate methods to discipline students instead of using corporal punishment. There was a statistically significant association between the mother's employment status and overall knowledge regarding corporal punishment ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Future studies must focus more on the students' perspective of corporal punishment. The current study attempted to bridge a knowledge gap which was essential to fill as the studies already conducted on the matter blatantly

disregarded the knowledge and most importantly the attitude of the party that undergoes corporal punishment. Emphasis must be applied to the consequences of corporal punishment which may manifest in the short term as well as the long term through more specific research.

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