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Knowledge, attitudes and practices on Influenza among patients attending the Outpatient Department (OPD) of Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH)

R Palihawadana^{1*}, M Hewagama¹, IG Gunathilaka¹, BP Hettiarachchi¹, JU Dayaratna¹, M Weerasekara², S Jayakody³

¹Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura; ²Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura; ³Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

*surangijayakody@sjp.ac.lk

Background: Influenza is a well-known public health problem in the world. Incidence of influenza cases are on the rise in Sri Lanka.

Objective: To determine the knowledge, attitudes & practices regarding influenza and associated factors in patients attending the OPD in Colombo South Teaching hospital (CSTH)

Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out in the OPD of CSTH in August 2019 among 384 adult patients. Systematic sampling method was used. Structured interviewer- administered questionnaire was used for data collection. Knowledge score was calculated and study population is categorized according to the mean score. Chi squared test was used with a p value of < 0.05 to determine the significance of categorical data.

Results: Majority of the study population were female (59.4%) and mean age was 42 years (SD=17.59). Majority have studied up to O/L (53.1%). Mean knowledge of the study population was 16.71 (SD=9.45). Scores ranged from 0-31 out of 31 questions which tested on the knowledge. Majority (60.7%) of the study population had good knowledge. Overall knowledge regarding the causative organisms, modes of transmission and symptoms and signs was good. However, majority of them (53.6%) didn't know about influenza vaccine. Majority had gained knowledge through media. Higher level of education and female sex were significantly associated with good knowledge (p<0.05). The positive attitude regarding getting a vaccine to prevent the transmission of the disease was higher among patients who had studied up to A/L & above. With regard to practices, majority of the participants (83.1%) stated that they would wear a face mask when having symptoms and also at crowded places during an epidemic. Frequent hand washing was practiced by 54% of the study population and 64% would avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth during an epidemic to prevent getting infected.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Majority of the study population had good knowledge on influenza as well as good hygienic practices during an outbreak. Strengthening of awareness campaign through media is recommended.

Key words: *Influenza, knowledge, attitudes, practices*

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Surge capacity of the public sector preventive healthcare institutions for the management of dengue in Kurunegala district

Nayani Rajapaksha^{1*}, Chrisantha Abeyseena², Aindralal Balasuriya³

¹Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka; ²Senior Professor, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Ragama; ³Senior Lecturer, Kothalawala Defense University, Rathmalana

*rmnur2014@gmail.com