

Assessment of laboratory safety knowledge among Allied Health Sciences students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

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Objectives: To determine the knowledge regarding laboratory safety precautions amongst Allied Health Sciences students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Methods: Cross-sectional study of Allied Health Sciences students was conducted using a standardized, 60-item structured self-administered questionnaire which enquired about knowledge, attitude and practices regarding laboratory safety precautions. The questionnaires were administered to a batch of 229 students. Descriptive statistics was generated using SPSS 16th version. Students scoring ≥ 75 , 74-60, 50-59 and ≤ 49 were classified as “excellent”, “good”, “moderate” and “poor” respectively.

Results: Participants included the students from B.Pharm 36.7% (n=84), B.Sc. (Medical Laboratory Sciences/MLS) 45.4% (n=104) and B.Sc. (Nursing) 17.9% (n=41), degree programs. Students’ overall knowledge towards the laboratory safety precautions is as follows; excellent 7.4% (n=17), good 27.5% (n=63), moderate 22.7% (n=52) and poor 42.4% (n=97). In general, students had a “good” knowledge in relation to safety laboratory practices, personal protective equipments, traceability and waste disposal. Knowledge regarding gas, chemical storage and glassware hazards was “moderate”. But their awareness was “poor” regard to safety equipments, emergency procedures, health awareness, laboratory equipments and instruments. A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was observed among the degree programs: B.Pharm: excellent 1.2% (n=1), good 10.7% (n=9), moderate 23.8% (n=20), B.Sc (MLS): excellent 15.4% (n=16), good 49% (n=51), moderate 18.3% (n=19) and B.Sc (Nursing); good 7.3% (n=3), moderate 31.7% (n=13). But there was no significant difference observed among the students belonging to different academic years of their Degree program.

Conclusions: The knowledge on laboratory safety precautions amongst Allied Health Sciences students are inadequate.