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ABSTRACTS OF SYMPOSIA LECTURES

Update on management of sleep apnoea

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Obstructive sleep apnoea is a very common condition for which there is very effective treatment. Clinical decision-making is straightforward in patients with severe disease who are symptomatic. It is much less clear what should be done for patients with mild disease, particularly those without symptoms and whether CPAP should be recommended just to reduce cardiovascular risk or the impact of other co morbidities.

While CPAP is the gold standard there are other treatment modalities available and these will be discussed briefly.

Finally it is well recognised that obstructive sleep apnea has an adverse impact upon the performance of safety critical tasks, particularly driving. The assessment of the at risk driver is very challenging and has major implications for both the individual but also society. Possible approaches to this difficult problem will be presented.

Symposium 6
Different facets of respiratory disorders 2
<i>Chairpersons: Prof N Bhatta, Dr N Dissanayake</i>

Allergic respiratory diseases in Sri Lanka; the way forward

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Asthma, atopic dermatitis, allergic rhinitis, allergic conjunctivitis, food allergies, insect venom allergies and anaphylaxis are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in the world. The global burden of allergy related diseases have trebled in the last decade and are also on the rise in lower middle income countries such as Sri Lanka. Allergy is becoming an important problem, not only due to the increase in prevalence, but also because prevalence of severe allergies and more complex forms of allergies affecting multiple systems are on the rise.

Sensitization to many environmental allergens is the cause of asthma and allergic rhinitis is approximately 80% of the patients. In a study done by us in children with asthma, at the Lady Ridgeway Hospital for children, 52.1% of the patients were sensitized to at least one allergen whereas 6.99% were sensitized to 3 or more allergens. 35.7% tested positive to house dust mite, 25.9% to cockroach and 5.6% to the indoor moulds, 12.6% to cats and 9.1% to dogs. Those with daily symptoms had a higher rate of sensitization to an allergen than those who had weekly or seasonal symptoms. Sensitization rates to common aeroallergens were higher in adult patients suffering from severe forms of asthma.

Until recently, the diagnosis of allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis in many patients could not be confirmed due to lack of diagnostic tests. However, many of our patients with allergic asthma and allergic rhinitis, only receive symptomatic treatment and are not offered immunotherapy, which can potentially cure them. Although immunotherapy for allergen desensitization in venom allergy, asthma and allergic rhinitis, is standard practice in many developed countries, in Sri Lanka we lag far behind.

We can be very proud of our achievement in primary health care and in combating and eradicating many communicable diseases. However, the epidemiological patterns of diseases have now changed with diseases due to allergies increasingly becoming common. Therefore, in order to meet these challenges, it would be crucial to improve education and training in the allergies and introducing 'novel' treatment modalities such as immunotherapy.