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“Building Bridges for Better Health”

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Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 576 school teachers in Matara District. Cluster randomized sampling was done and pre tested structured self-administered questionnaire was used. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated using standardized instruments by trained research assistants.

Results: Gender is equally distributed and the majority belongs to 36-45 years age group (39%). Prevalence of diabetes mellitus was 14.7% while 10.7% had hypertension, 17.3% had hypercholesterolemia and 2.0% had cancers. There was only 2% of current smokers and 8% of current drinkers. The majority (69.3%) consumed adequate amount of vegetables but there was only 42% who had fruits often. Only 12.0% had fast food more than twice per week and similar figure for carbonated drinks was 9.4%. The majority (87.0%) engaged in moderate intensity physical activities regularly. Only 54.0% was in satisfactory range of BMI while 4.7% belonged to obese category. There were more males among those who took fast food frequently ($p < 0.001$). When the level of physical activity was compared it was apparent that more males engaged in vigorous level physical activities ($p = 0.038$).

Conclusions: Dietary practices and engagement in physical activities among teachers were satisfactory but more males tend to consume fast foods. BMI was higher as the majority was at risk level.

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Preliminary study of blood pressure levels among Southern Province based free-health-camp attendees
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Objectives: To identify the blood pressure levels among the free-health-camp attendees in Southern Province of Sri Lanka.

Methods: Medical camps were carried out in two rural villages in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Blood pressure was measured in 171 (61 males: 110 females) of 230 participants aged over 20 years (range-25-83years), using manual mercury sphygmomanometers following a 15 minutes' rest. Blood pressure levels were classified according to the British Hypertension Society (BHS) guidance.

Results: 57.31% (98/171) [38 males: 60 females] had optimal systolic blood pressure (SBP). Normal SBP was recorded in 2.34% (4/171) [between 30-60 years] of them and higher normal SBP in 22.22% (38/171). High SBP was demonstrated in 18.13% (31/171) where 15.2% (26/171) [9 males:17 females] had Grade-1 systolic hypertension (SHT) while 1.75% (3/171) and 1.17% (2/171) had Grade-2 and Grade-3 SHT respectively. The majority (17/26) of Grade-1 SHT patients were between 41-60 years of age. Grade-3 SHT was limited to the older population (aged above 60 years). Out of total population, 71.35% (122/171) had optimal diastolic blood pressure (DBP). Higher normal DBP were recorded in 1.17% (2/171). High DBP recorded in 27.49% (47/171) where 20.47% (35/171) demonstrated Grade-1 diastolic hypertension (DHT), while 4.68% (8/171) and 2.34% (4/171) had Grade-2 and Grade-3 DHT respectively. Majority (19/35) of Grade-1 DHT were aged between 46-60 years. Grade-3 DHT was reported in 2 age peaks of 40-50years and 76-80years. Isolated SHT recorded in 4.09% (07/171). Out of them 71.42% (05/07) belonged to Grade-1 while 28.57% (02/07) belonged to Graded-2 isolated SHT categories.

Conclusions: According to BHS classification, prevalence of high blood pressure is significant in this rural community. Further population screenings and research are necessary for early identification and management of hypertension.