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Knowledge and practice regarding prevention and self-management of varicose veins among selected nursing officers in Colombo South Teaching Hospital, Sri Lanka

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Background: Nurses are more prone to develop varicose veins because of the nature of their job that requires prolonged standing during their work shift, which in turn causes morbidity of nurses and loss of precious work hours leading to a significant financial burden on the healthcare system.

Objective: To assess the knowledge and practice regarding prevention and self-management of varicose veins among selected nursing officers in Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH), Sri Lanka.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in November 2020 with nursing officers working at CSTH during the period of data collection using a pretested, validated, self-administered online questionnaire prepared as a Google form to be circulated via electronic mail. Nursing officers who had electronic email addresses were included in the study. Accordingly, the google form was sent to 120 nursing officers in the study setting. Analysis was done using SPSS statistical software version 25.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) and Chi-square test was employed. Significance was considered as $p < 0.05$.

Results: Seventy nursing officers responded. Accordingly, the valid response rate was 58%. Mean age was 33.16 ± 7.2 years. Out of 70 participants, the majority was females (85.7%), married (52.9%), diploma holders in nursing (65.7%), and had <11 years of work experience (70%). Both level of knowledge and level of practice defined into 3 categories with using the total knowledge score. Good level (>75%), Moderate/satisfactory level (50-75%) and poor level (<50%). Nearly 56% had moderate level of knowledge, while 6% had poor level of knowledge. Contrary to expectations, the majority (70%) had poor level of practice and only 1% had good level of practice. A significant relationship was observed between knowledge level and three sociodemographic factors; age ($p=0.031$), professional education ($p=0.045$) and work place ($p=0.031$).

Conclusion: Most nurses had a moderate knowledge level but their practice regarding prevention and self-management was poor. It is recommended to organize educational sessions for nurses focusing on importance of adhering good practice for prevention and self-management of varicose veins.