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A Study of the efficacy and factors affecting drug compliance in the mass drug administration programme against lymphatic filariasis in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

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This descriptive, comparative, cross-sectional, randomized community based study was done to determine the factors that influence drug compliance with respect to the mass drug administration programme (MDA) against filariasis in the urban and rural populations, as well as to assess the impact of the 2004 MDA on filarial infection immediately and 9 months after administration of drugs. Factors influencing drug compliance was determined by administration of an interviewer based pre-tested structured questionnaire which elicited information regarding drug compliance, socio-economic status, educational background, knowledge, attitudes and practices with regard to the 2004 MDA. Drug compliance appeared to be an important determinant for reduction of antigenaemia when the prevalence of infection was high. However, the 20 percent difference in compliance between urban and rural areas did not affect the prevalence of infection. Knowledge and attitude regarding filariasis and the MDA programme as well as factors pertaining to drug distribution were found to have an important influence on drug compliance. However, the belief that the MDA programme was beneficial was the most important factor affecting drug compliance as revealed by multivariate analysis of data combined from both districts. Therefore, it is essential for awareness programmes to highlight the dangers (complications) of the disease and to influence the community to perceive the benefits of a filariasis-free community as well as the 'beyond filariasis' benefits of having albendazole given in combination in the MDA programme.