

Introduction: Gastro oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) is a common problem encountered in medical practice in Sri Lanka. Surprisingly, its community prevalence in Sri Lanka is unknown. In this preliminary study, we assessed the prevalence of GORD symptoms in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

Methods: A total of 330 adults (age 18-70 years, mean 45.7 years, SD 13.7 years; F:M=1:1.1) were recruited from all 3 districts of Western province by random cluster sampling. An interviewer administered questionnaire with a country validated GORD screening tool (which measures the frequency and severity of heartburn, regurgitation, chest pain, bloating etc.) and other tools (validated stress level questionnaire, food frequency questionnaire etc) to measure various associated factors were used. Weight, height, waist, and hip circumference were measured using standard techniques.

Results: Eighty-five people (25.8%) had heartburn and/ or acid regurgitation at least once a week which is an internationally used criterion for probable GORD. When comparing those with GORD versus those without, female gender (females 57.6% vs. males 42.4%), use of medications such as antiasthmatics (11.8% vs. 4.1%) and statins (24.7% vs. 13.1%), asthma (14.1% vs. 5.7%), abdominal obesity (77.6% vs. 62%), high stress level (55.3% vs. 33.9%) and habits such as skipping breakfast (37.6% vs. 19.2%), sleeping after meals (54.1% vs. 38%) and smoking (30.6% vs. 19.2%), were found to be significant factors ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusions:** Western province of Sri Lanka has a high GORD symptom prevalence rate of 25.8% which is higher than reported in many other Asian countries and is comparable to that reported in Western world. This could be due to highly westernised lifestyle habits and diet in this province.