SOP-13: Knowledge, attitudes and prevalence of selected cardiovascular disease risk factors among Advanced Level students in government schools in Colombo Municipal Council Area

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Introduction: Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) have been the subject of numerous researches, but there haven't been many that specifically target adolescents in Sri Lanka. This study aimed at assessing the knowledge, attitudes and the prevalence of behavioural risk factors, and the association between behavioural risk factors and knowledge on CVD among Advanced Level (A/L) students of government schools in Colombo Municipal Council area.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was done in a total of 109 students using a pretested self-administered questionnaire, prepared from selected parts of a validated questionnaire used in STEPS survey.

Results: The mean score on knowledge on CVD risk factors was 68.2%, while 54.1% had sufficient knowledge (above the mean score) on CVD. It was found that 98.2% students did not meet the WHO recommendation on daily vegetable intake. Only 18.3% consumed the recommended daily number or more of fruit servings. However, 38.5% of students always consumed more than the recommended amount of salt, while 28.4% of students ate oily food all the time. Similarly, the WHO recommended level of physical activity was not met by 51.4% of the students. Regarding attitudes, 70.64% agreed that heart diseases are preventable, 88.9% disagreed that learning about CVD is a waste of time, and 73.39% agreed that heart diseases are a public health problem in Sri Lanka. On the contrary, students with a good level of knowledge on CVD, consumed oily food all the time ($p=0.008$). However, there was no significant association between knowledge and other risk factors, such as salt intake or physical activity.

Conclusions: Adequate knowledge alone is insufficient to reduce the prevalence of behavioural risk factors, thus action to uplift healthy lifestyle behaviour among school children is warranted.

Keywords: knowledge, attitudes, risk factors, cardiovascular diseases, adolescents

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