SOP-11: Knowledge, practices and their correlates related to adequate water intake among schoolteachers in Colombo Educational Zone

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Introduction: Adequate water drinking is essential for good health; however, often overlooked. Studies on this subject are lacking in Sri Lanka. Teachers impart knowledge and may influence water drinking practices of students. We assessed knowledge, practices and their correlates related to adequate water intake among schoolteachers.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 111 schoolteachers of two schools in Colombo Educational Zone, using snowball sampling method. An online self-administered google-form comprising 27 questions assessed socio-demographic factors, knowledge and practices related to adequate water intake. Scores were given for knowledge (≥35 good; <35 poor) and water related practices (≥ 37 good; <37 poor). Statistical analysis was done using Chi-squared test and t-test.

Results: The male to female ratio was 4:33 with a mean age of 45.06 years. Non-science subjects were taught by 73.9% (n=82). Mean score of knowledge on adequate water intake was 42.72 (range: 24-57), while the mean score of adequate water intake practices was 29.49 (range: 12-44). There was a significant difference between the mean water intake practice scores of non-science and science teachers (p=0.03). Knowledge regarding the importance of hydration for spinal cord protection among science teachers significantly differed from that of non-science teachers (p=0.005). Teachers with experience of ≥19 years (n=45; 90%) (p=0.001) imparted knowledge on adequate water intake outside the curriculum than other teachers.

Conclusions: Overall, water intake practices were poor among science teachers despite having adequate knowledge. Older teachers preferred traditional modes of gaining knowledge while having a positive influence on water habits. The study findings could be useful for future studies on water habits among different population groups in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: adequate water intake, knowledge of water intake, practice of water intake, teachers

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