SOP-08: Knowledge and attitudes of medical officers on the healthcare needs of LGBT people

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Introduction: The lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community, being the sexual minority, is subjected to discrimination in healthcare settings due to the lack of knowledge and development of hostile attitudes among healthcare professionals. This study assessed the knowledge and attitudes of medical officers in two selected hospitals in Sri Lanka towards LGBT people and their healthcare needs and identified various factors associated with their attitudes.

Methods: The study was carried out as a descriptive cross-sectional study with an analytical component with the participation of 112 medical officers from two selected hospitals in Sri Lanka. Data were collected through an online self-administered questionnaire made by the amalgamation of modified Sex Education and Knowledge about Homosexuality Questionnaire and Attitudes towards Homosexuality Questionnaire (AHQ).

Results: The response rate was 97.3%. Out of 109 medical officers, the majority had a good level of knowledge (70.6%) and attitudes (94.5%) towards LGBT people. Furthermore, a moderate, positive linear correlation ($r=0.567$) between knowledge and attitudes was noted. Socio-demographic factors; sex, marital status, hometown of the participants and professional factors; years of experience and graduated university showed no association with attitudes, whereas a strong association between religiosity which was determined based on a subjective question and negative attitudes was noted ($p<0.05$).

Conclusions: Knowledge and attitudes of medical officers in the selected hospitals are satisfactory and knowledge is a possible tool in shaping the attitudes towards the LGBT community. Factors like sex, marital status, hometown, years of service and graduated university have no impact on the attitudes of medical officers towards LGBT people. However, increased religiosity has a negative impact on the attitudes towards the LGBT community.

Keywords: LGBT, medical Officers, healthcare needs, knowledge, attitudes

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