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Knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) on dengue control in Gampaha district.

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Dengue/Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) has become a major public health problem in many parts of the tropics. In Sri Lanka, it is endemic in some parts of the country with outbreaks of dengue/ DHF. The present study was done to assess 1) knowledge regarding dengue among the general population in the district of Gampaha, 2) whether simple preventive measures are being practiced in the community. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in selected 2000 households in the Gampaha District from June - August, 2007 using a pre-tested structured questionnaire to assess the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding dengue. The majority of the respondents interviewed were females (65.2%). More than 90% have had secondary education (90.2%). The main source of water supply were pipe borne (43.4%) and well water (40.6%). 64.3% households stored water for washing, drinking and cleaning purposes. More than 95% of the respondents had heard about dengue fever and its transmission. 91.3% cited that their main source of information on dengue was from television/radio. 34.3% had either received advice or participated in a training programme on dengue prevention and 7.8% had received support materials. The main preventive measure used to reduce the mosquito nuisance was personal protection with repellents (73.6%). Most of the respondents (56.8%) felt that no action was taken by the government to control mosquitoes. When respondents views were taken, the suggestions made by them to improve dengue control included, fogging (31.8%), educating people (30.5%), treating water (24.3%) and cleaning the environment (19.5%). When questions were directed at possible methods for community participation for dengue control, the majority were in favour of removing solid waste (84.15%), eliminating stagnant water collections (40.7%), removing larvae (8.75%) and covering all the water containers using lids (8.1%). The community had good understanding on dengue and the main source of information was from the electronic media. However it was found that good knowledge itself does not necessarily lead to good practices. The respondents' attitudes were found to be good and most of them were supportive of control measures. Mass media is an important means of conveying health messages to the public, thus research and development of educational strategies designed to improve behaviour and practices of effective control measures through mass media among the community are recommended.

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