



113/A/Poster

### **Evaluation of the existing knowledge on dengue among 13-15 year old school children of Kelaniya education zone in Gampaha District of Sri Lanka**

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High density of students in schools and poor attention to vector control aspects have increased the risk for dengue transmission among school children in Sri Lanka. Limited awareness and knowledge among school children have further intensified the above risk. Thus, the current study focused on identifying the gaps in knowledge and awareness of students on various aspects of dengue in order to promote school based health education programmes for dengue control. Ten schools located in Kelaniya educational zone, Gampaha District, Western Province representing different school categories were selected randomly and a total of 2,194 students in age group of 13 – 15 years were enrolled into the study. The existing knowledge of students on different aspects of dengue, namely, disease transmission, vector ecology, symptoms and patient care, and control and prevention practices, were evaluated using a self-administered questionnaire comprising 20 questions. Overall knowledge of students was calculated as a percentage (out of 20), and knowledge levels were classified as: Very Poor (<20%), Low (21 – 40%), Moderate (41 – 60%), Good (61 – 80%) and Excellent (81 – 100%). General Linear Model (GLM) was used to investigate the variations of knowledge levels between schools. The majority of students were identified as having “Good” (46.31%, n= 1016) and “Moderate” (42.62%, n= 935) levels of awareness, while only 2.92% (n= 64) was noted as “Excellent” (>80%) knowledge category. However, the awareness on symptoms and patient care (average of 46%) among students was limited. In accordance with the statistics of GLM, significant variations were noted on different knowledge categories regarding dengue among study population ( $p < 0.05$  at 95% level of confidence). Further, school category was insignificant for the knowledge level on dengue ( $p > 0.05$ ). It is recommended to implement School-based educational programmes in order to raise the awareness and to translate knowledge into sound practice to control dengue disease epidemics in these areas.

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