Knowledge on COVID19 among Health Care Support Personnel in a Tertiary Care Hospital in Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Hospitals are being overcrowded with daily rising COVID-19 patients. Healthcare support personnel are more exposed to the COVID-19, due to their nature of work. This includes ambulance drivers, ward attendants, labourers, and cleaners. Their inadequate knowledge affects their attitudes and practices which lead to poor infection control practices, increased intra-hospital transmission, and self-exposure. Our aim is to study the COVID-19 related knowledge and associated factors of the healthcare support personnel. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from September to December 2020. Data was collected from healthcare support personnel at the Colombo south teaching hospital, Kalubowila through an interviewer-administered questionnaire. There were 7 knowledge questions. The total score obtained by each participant was expressed as a percentage of the total possible score. A cut off level of 80% was considered as "good" knowledge. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 21. There were 383 respondents including (5 ambulance drivers (1%), 19 ward attendants (5%), 349 labourers (91%) and, 10 cleaners (2.6%). Among them, 60% of the ambulance drivers, 58% of the ward attendants, 66% of the HCAs and 20% of the cleaners had good knowledge about COVID-19. Those belonged to the age group of 21-30 years (p=0.017), work experience of 10 years or less (p=0.01) and, level of education up to GCE(A/L) (p= 0.001>) had significant good knowledge. Cleaners had very poor knowledge (80%) among all. Most of the respondents had a satisfactory level of knowledge except the cleaners. It is important to have structured training programmes, including basic knowledge of COVID-19 and preventive methods to improve the adherence to precautions in view of protecting themselves and mitigating the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, healthcare support personnel, knowledge