

Awareness of Sexually Transmitted Infections among Advanced Level Students, Attending Tuition Classes in Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

HMSA Herath#, PWSV Fernando, DWY Mahanama, BDSB Bandara,
S De S Nagahawatte and NS Fernando

Faculty of Medicine, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

#sanuriherath26@gmail.com

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) have become a major problem due to the lack of awareness, especially among sexually active adolescents. Worldwide, nearly two-thirds of the Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) affect individuals aged 25 years and younger. We aimed to assess the knowledge of school going adolescents on STIs. Upon obtaining ethical clearance, a cross-sectional study based on convenience sampling was performed among 402 Advanced Level (G.C.E. A/L) students aged 18 and above attending a set of selected tuition classes in Nugegoda, Sri Lanka for Biology, Mathematics, Commerce, and Arts. We employed a pre-tested self-administered questionnaire to collect responses to STI-related questions, in which we were able to acquire a response rate of 87.8%. The results were analysed using the Microsoft Excel 2016 spreadsheet package, dividing into categories: knowledge of STIs, awareness of STI transmission and prevention. First, the percentages of awareness level of the responses were evaluated within the sample. Then, the chi-square test was used for associations between the awareness level and each demographic type. The results showed that 72.1% of the respondents gathered knowledge from the school syllabus. The overall knowledge of STIs was better with males (68.6%) and Biology students (65.8%). The significant associations were shown between gender and the overall knowledge ($p=0.035$), religion with STI transmission ($p=0.000$) and prevention ($p=0.000$), and monthly income with overall knowledge ($p=0.017$). Many respondents were aware of STI transmission (57.6%) and prevention (52.8%), but only 43.5% had basic knowledge on STIs. Therefore, it is recommended to educate adolescents on STIs for broader knowledge through the educational system.

Keywords: *sexually transmitted infections, advanced level students, awareness*