

Knowledge, Attitudes, Self-Reported Adherence to Antibiotics and Their Associated Factors among Undergraduate University Students in Sri Lanka: An Online Survey

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Antibiotic resistance (ABR) occurs when bacteria change in response to the use of antibiotics. These bacteria become resistant to antibiotics and may infect humans and animals. Therefore, present descriptive cross-sectional online-based survey aimed to determine the knowledge, attitudes and self-reported adherence to antibiotics among the university students (n=250) of Sri Lanka. A pretested interviewer administered questionnaire was used for collecting data from January 2021 to December 2021. Processing and analysis of data were performed using SPSS statistic software package version 25. Study findings revealed that the general knowledge, attitudes and self-reported adherence to antibiotics among the undergraduate university students were satisfactory, with good knowledge, attitudes and self-reported adherence being 49.4%, 45.5% and 48.6% respectively. Present study revealed a significant association between knowledge and sociodemographic factors such as gender (t= -3.338; p= 0.001), field of study (t = 5.797; p < 0.001) and A/L stream (t= 10.649; p < 0.001). Gender (t= -2.904, p = 0.004), A/L stream (t= -2.903; p= 0.004) and higher education attainment of the mother (t = -2.233; p = 0.026) were significantly associated with improved attitudes. Additionally, significant association was shown between adherence and sociodemographic factors such as field of study (t value= 3.537; p value < 0.001) and A/L stream (t value = 5.907; p value < 0.001). As more than half the population had inadequate knowledge, attitudes and adherence, multifaceted intervention programmes should be done targeting the public, policymakers and pharmacies to determine the best and most successful intervention to enhance the adherence of antibiotics among the individuals of Sri Lanka and to reduce ABR.

Keywords: *bacteria, education, resistance, public, sociodemographic*