

Covid-19 Infection: A Survey of Knowledge and Attitude of Non-Academic Staff in a Sri Lankan University

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Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka, the functioning of state Universities were hampered by a number of lockdowns. Even after two years, most of the Universities have not been fully operational due to the health restrictions, and normalcy is still being restored. The contribution by the non-academic staff of a university is vital to the smooth functioning of academic programmes. A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in early 2022 to assess the knowledge, possible misconceptions, and post-vaccination attitudes of the non-academic staff of a state university, through an online survey. There were no previous studies in this regard. The self-administered questionnaire assessed general knowledge related to the Covid 19 infection, mode of transmission, safety precautions, symptoms, diagnosis and post-vaccine attitudes. A scoring system was adopted to determine the adequacy of knowledge, where a score exceeding 50 was considered satisfactory. A total of 70 non-academic staff members participated in this study. The study revealed that participants possess satisfactory knowledge pertaining to general information (80%), transmission (99%), and safety precautions related to COVID-19 (99%) obtaining a score of >50%. The knowledge on handwashing technique was sub-optimal. Gaps in knowledge were identified related to symptoms and diagnosis, with only 65% scoring >50%. Some misconceptions held included, that coriander and steam inhalation cured the infection. A positive attitude was evident towards adhering to safety precautions even post-vaccination. The results of the survey will be useful in planning future health education activities related to Covid-19 in universities.

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