

Knowledge and practices regarding selected aspects of sexual abuse among mothers of adolescent children in the Medical Officer of Health area, Udubaddawa

Makawita MUM¹, Jayawardana P²

1. *PGIM Trainee MD Community Medicine*
2. *Senior Lecturer, Dept. Of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya*

Introduction

Emergence of child sexual abuse of adolescents is one of the major issues encountered globally. Inadequacy of preventive measures undertaken by mothers as a result of poor knowledge would make their children vulnerable to this horrendous experience which may have disastrous consequences on their physical, psychological and social well being.

Objective

To determine the knowledge and practices related to selected aspects of sexual abuse among mothers of adolescent children in the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area, Udubaddawa.

Methods

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in all 13 Public Health Midwife areas in the MOH area, Udubaddawa. Seven hundred and fifteen mothers, 55 from each PHM area, having an adolescent child/children were selected through cluster sampling. Knowledge and practices were assessed using a self administered questionnaire. A score of $\geq 50\%$ was selected to define "good" knowledge and practices. Chi squared test was applied to determine factors associated with "good" knowledge and practices.

Results

The proportions of mothers with good overall knowledge and practices were 52.3% (n=374) and 39.2% (n=280) respectively. The variables that were significantly associated with good over all knowledge were educational level of $>GCE$ O/L (60%; n=206) in comparison to $<GCE$ O/L (45%; n=168) [$p=0.00007$] and a monthly family income of $>Rs.$ 15,000 (63%; n=64) in comparison to $<Rs.$ 15,000 (51%; n=38) [$p=0.03$]. With regard to good overall practices the only variable which showed a significant association was an educational level of $2GCE$ O/L (56%; n=158) in comparison to $<GCE$ O/L (44%; n=122) [$p=0.0003$].

Conclusion

Only 52% of mothers had good overall knowledge and 39%, good over all practices. Recommend awareness raising campaigns to educate mothers on child sexual abuse as this will help minimise the vulnerability, equally of both male and female children to a great extent.