OP 21: A survey on current knowledge and practices of teleaudiology among audiology professionals in Sri Lanka

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Introduction: With the advancement of technology and resources, telehealth is becoming a prominent method of providing audiology services across the world. Teleaudiology services in Sri Lanka are evolving and still is an under addressed area of local literature compared to other telehealth applications in medical sector.

Objectives: To describe the current knowledge and practices of teleaudiology and factors affecting planning and implementation of teleaudiology in Sri Lanka.

Methods: This is a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among 104 (n=104) audiology professionals employed in public and private setups across the country using an online self-administered questionnaire.

Results: The study yielded a response rate of 83.87% and majority (75.0%) of the participants were female. Age distribution of participants was between 25 and 45 years. Majority (79.8%) reported awareness on teleaudiology while 32.7% of them utilised it. Initiation of teleaudiology was influenced by COVID-19 pandemic. Reported uses of teleaudiology were predominantly counselling, education, hearing aid related rehabilitation, and prevention as individual or group sessions, utilising hybrid telehealth model. More than 75.0% of the services were centralised within Western province in private centres. Despite practices, several challenges were reported as influencing teleaudiology, including lack of facilities as major challenge while reporting several benefits.

Conclusions: The findings of the study indicate the availability of teleaudiology in Sri Lanka however it is restricted to certain geographic areas and to certain services. This study sheds lights on current teleaudiology practices with an emphasis on factors affecting, which will assist in improving services further.

Keywords: Teleaudiology, audiology, professionals, technology