

## **Assessment of the quality of life of cutaneous leishmaniasis patients in Hambantota district and patient satisfaction to treatment; A cross-sectional study**

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Cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) is a persistent public health challenge in Sri Lanka, with escalating cases necessitating effective disease control strategies. This cross-sectional study was conducted in October/ November 2023 among randomly selected patients (>16 years old) diagnosed with CL and obtaining treatment for CL at the Hambantota District general hospital in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Information relevant to socio-demographic status, health-care-seeking behavior, awareness regarding the disease and treatment satisfaction was obtained using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. A self-administered dermatology life quality index (DLQI) questionnaire was used to assess the impact of the disease condition on the quality of life of patients. A total of 57 patients diagnosed with CL consented to participate in the survey. Most were in the 31-55 age group (38.6%; n=22), followed by 16-30 (36.8%; n=21). The largest group consisted of students (33.3%; n=19), followed by farmers (19.3%; n=11) and individuals engaged in outdoor-based casual labor (12.3%; n=7). Only 35% (n=20) correctly identified the causative agent and 47% (n=27) identified the vector. Many participants stated that accessing the treatment facility is difficult due to the distance from their village (64.7%; n=37). The lesions of most of the patients (86%; n=49) were being treated with sodium stibogluconate, and most (77.2%; n=44) were satisfied with the treatment, stating that there was a visible reduction in the size of the lesion with treatment. However, 45.6% (n=26) complained of side effects, mainly headaches after treatment. According to the DQLI, work or study (2.18) and symptoms & feeling (1.25) domains indicated a low impact (DQLI 2-5). However, all other categories, namely, daily chores (0.95), leisure (0.86), treatment (0.68), and personal relationships (0.56), demonstrated no impact (DQLI 0-1) on the study population. The study emphasizes the need for enhanced awareness programs, improved access to rural healthcare, and measures to alleviate economic burdens.

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