PP13: Knowledge and expectations of parents regarding the role of antibiotic treatment of upper respiratory tract infections - a survey among parents attending a tertiary care institution with a sick child

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Introduction: Parents' knowledge and expectations regarding antibiotics contribute for antibiotic misuse inpaediatric practice.

Methods: Parents of children suffering from URTI, attending the OPD and Professorial Paediatric Unit of the Teaching Hospital, Ragama, were interviewed for knowledge, attitudes and practices during URTI pre-tested questionnaire by doctors from February to July 2005. Results: 235 parents (230 mothers) mean age 31.9 years (SD: 7.33) participated in the study. The level of education was; below grade 5:11 (4.7%), Grade 5-10: 142 (60.4%), grade 10-12:71 (30.2%) and higher education: 11 (4.7%). Of the 235,201 (85.1%) identified antibiotics as a component of treatment. However only 11 (4.7%) knew that antibiotics were against bacterial infections; 212 (90.3%), 189 (80.8%), 176 (75%), 165 (70.4%), 130(55,4%), 77 (32.8%) and55 (23.6%) identified them as treatment for cough, fever, phlegm, cold, sore throat, ear ache and headache either alone or combination. 116 (49.3%) and 119 (50.3%) thought that antibiotic treatment was important to cure the illness or for early recovery respectively. The expectation of being given an antibiotic for an URTI (always, 75%, 50% and 25% of the time and never) was 28 (12%), 39 (17%), 23 (10%), 119 (51%) and 23 (10%) respectively. Twenty (8.5%) had requested an antibiotic when it had not been prescribed; 12(60%) from apharmacy and 8 (40%) from the doctor. 172 (73%) claimed to complete the full course of treatment, while 18 (7.8%) kept the 'excess' antibiotics for future use.

Conclusions: Knowledge, expectations, demand and self medication with antibiotics seems to be low among parents in our population.