

**OP 04: Selected obesity related non-communicable diseases (NCD's), associated risk factors and knowledge on NCD's among Buddhist monks and lay people in Colombo district, Sri Lanka**

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**Introduction:** Obesity related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become a global pandemic. Buddhist monks have been excluded from most studies on NCDs done in Sri Lanka.

**Objectives:** This cross-sectional study is the first study conducted on Buddhist monks with the aim of comparing the presence of obesity related NCDs, associated risk factors and knowledge on NCDs and comparing them with laypeople in Colombo district.

**Methods:** An interviewer-administered questionnaire was administered to 80 monks and male lay people each, aged 18-60 years. The collected data on the presence of NCDs, associated risk factors and knowledge were analyzed by chi-square and independent sample t-tests.

**Results:** Diabetes was the commonest NCD among monks while both hypertension and diabetes were equally common in laypeople. Among monks, presence of NCDs increased with period of ordination and good knowledge on risk factors was associated with a higher percentage of adequate physical activity. Laypeople had greater overall knowledge on selected NCDs, and risk factors and this proportion increased with their education level. The presence of family history of NCDs was also higher among laypeople while fresh fruit consumption was low in both groups.

**Conclusions:**

The findings of this study indicate that a significant proportion of monks and lay people have at least one NCD and the knowledge of Buddhist monks on NCDs needs to be improved. More studies with greater sample sizes should be done to assess if the NCD prevalence increased with ordination period due to age or the different lifestyles that Buddhist monks lead.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, obesity, non-communicable diseases, Buddhist monks