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Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about liver transplantation among caregivers of children with liver diseases; a single centre experience from Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Paediatric Liver transplantation (PLT) is evolving in Sri Lanka. There is no data documented related to caregivers' knowledge of PLT.

Objectives

To determine the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about liver transplantation (LT) among caregivers of children with liver diseases.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among the caregivers attending the paediatric liver clinic at Ragama. The calculated sample size was 186. Data were collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics with SPSS 27.0 were used for analysis. Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty of Medicine, Ragama. Since there were no previous similar studies, as the tool, we used a newly designed, pre-tested questionnaire which included the basic facts about the knowledge of LT.

Results

Of 186 caregivers, the majority were mothers (n=107, 57%). A mixed religious background was noted with Buddhists, Catholics, Islam and Hindus being 80%, 11%, 7% and 2% respectively. Most were educated up to or above the GCE ordinary level (n=180, 97%). The majority (n=124, 68%) were from low-income families with a monthly income of less than 50,000 LKR. Almost half of the participants, 89 (47.8%) knew someone who had undergone an LT. Knowledge of having PLT within the country, living donation, diseased donation, blood group matching and life-long medications were accurate in 171 (91.9%), 170 (91%), 75 (40%), 172 (92%), 116 (62%) respectively. Regarding the beliefs and attitudes towards LT, 170 (91%) were willing to donate and 144 (77%) indicated to support LT. There were 32 (17%) who believed that liver diseases can be cured with alternative medicine and 103 (55%) believed being religious would result in better outcomes.

Conclusion

Knowledge of LT among caregivers is promising with a positive attitude. Some of their beliefs seem to be non-scientific.

Key words: *Knowledge, caregivers, liver transplantation, children, Sri Lanka*