

Oral Presentations

Oral Presentation Session 1: Public Health and Primary Care

OP 01: Knowledge, attitudes, and consequences of corporal punishment among school children aged 15-19 years and its associated factors in selected schools in Colombo, Gampaha and Kegalle Districts

Krishan Dhammearatchi, Dumindri Fernando, Chandrajith Devruwan, Adeetha Sandeepani, Aazeema Ramzani, Sampatha Goonewardena, Dammika Ariyaratna

Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenapura

Introduction: Corporal punishment is a common method to correct or control a child's behaviour. Teachers use physical force, intending the student to respond to the pain caused by the punishments. Its physical and psycho-social outcomes can have long lasting impacts on growth towards adulthood.

Objective: To describe the knowledge, attitudes and consequences of corporal punishment (CP) among school children aged 15-19 years and its associated factors in schools in Colombo, Kegalle and Gampaha districts.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 245 school children aged 15-19 years. Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire and SPSS Statistics Version 26 was used for data analysis. $P < 0.05$ was taken as the level of significance.

Results: Only 42.9% of the participants were aware that CP was illegal. At least one form of CP was experienced by the majority (86.4%). Kneeling, standing on chairs and ear twisting were commonly experienced (>80%). Majority had felt pain and physical discomfort. Most (60.4%) acknowledged that they understood their wrongdoings after being punished. Interestingly, 76.7% of the students do not believe that CP is an acceptable practice and only 29% considers it a positive influence. Majority (88.2%) would prefer positive methods of discipline as alternatives to corporal punishment. There was a statistically significant association between the mother's employment status and knowledge regarding CP.

Conclusions: Steps should be taken to improve awareness on methods of student discipline, emphasising the consequences of corporal punishment.

Keywords: Corporal punishment, knowledge, attitudes, consequences