

## Knowledge on Paracetamol Among Mothers of Children Admitted to Paediatric Units, Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Many mothers self-medicate their children with paracetamol. Therefore knowledge of mothers on paracetamol is important for safe and appropriate use. This study was designed to assess the knowledge on paracetamol among mothers of children admitted to paediatric units of Teaching Hospital, Jaffna (THJ). A cross sectional descriptive study, was carried out in paediatric units of THJ in July-September 2013, using interviewer-administered questionnaire. Interpretation of doses given by mothers was made according to the recommend doses for bodyweight. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. Data collected from 422 mothers aged between 19-45 years. All mothers knew that dose of the paracetamol should be according to either age or bodyweight of the child; according to age 40.5% (n=171), weight 50.2% (n=212) and both age and weight 9.2% (n=39). When considering preparations, 44.3% (n=187) used paediatric preparation and the rest used adult tablet. Most mothers [92.2% (n=383)] knew that there should be a minimum interval between the doses and only 18.2% (n=77) of mothers were aware of maximum daily dose. Fever was the frequent indication 95.7% (n=404) for paracetamol use. 25.3% (n=107) of mothers gave appropriate dose of paracetamol at home, while 59% (n=249) and 15.6% (n=66) were subtherapeutic doses and supratherapeutic doses respectively. Only one quarter of mothers gave paracetamol within the recommended dose at home. Two thirds gave subtherapeutic doses which may be a result of too much emphasis on the risk of paracetamol overdose.

**Keywords:** Paracetamol; Self-medication; Therapeutic dose