

## **Knowledge and practices towards nutritional anaemia and associated factors among mothers of children admitted to paediatric wards in the Teaching Hospital Jaffna**

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**Background and Objective:** As anaemia is a common issue among children, studying maternal knowledge and practices on nutritional anaemia would be useful for prevention. The objective of this study was to describe the knowledge and practices towards nutritional anaemia and to determine the associated factors among mothers of children admitted to the paediatric wards at the Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

**Methods:** This institution-based cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 427 mothers of children admitted to paediatric wards of Teaching Hospital Jaffna from August 2020 to January 2022 using an interviewer-administered questionnaire in the KoBoCollect app and analyzed using SPSS.

**Results:** The response rate was 100%. Mean age of participants was 33 (SD 6) years and majority were married (88%), Tamils (98.4%), housewives (75.6%), living in nuclear families (72.4%), studied up to GCE A/L or below (87.4%), with reported monthly incomes less than Rs. 30,000. A little over half the sample (55.5%, n=237) had heard about nutritional anaemia. Regarding practices, the majority (84.8%) followed the proper cooking method of green leaves. Even though most (86.9%) named iron deficiency as a cause for nutritional anaemia, only 8% took green leaves twice a day and 44.7% took green leaves more than 4 times a week. While 32.1% of people had green leaves 2-4 days per week, 11.7% did so once per week and 3.5% had them less than once per week. Knowledge was associated with average monthly family income ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 50.08$ ,  $df = 1$ ), educational level of the mother ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 34.89$ ,  $df = 1$ ), and occupation status ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 26.31$ ,  $df = 1$ ). Practices regarding nutritional anaemia were associated with educational level of mothers ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 25.41$ ,  $df = 1$ ), occupation status ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 17.17$ ,  $df = 1$ ) and type of family ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 12.731$ ,  $df = 1$ ).

**Conclusions:** A little over half the women in the sample had heard about nutritional anaemia. Knowledge was associated with the average monthly family income, educational level of the mother, and occupation status. Practices regarding nutritional anaemia were associated with educational level of mothers, occupation status, and type of family. Raising awareness among the public regarding nutritional anaemia is recommended.

**Keywords:** Nutritional anaemia, Knowledge, Practices