Abstract 3:

Knowledge on early symptoms of acute stroke, acute ischemic heart disease, and their risk factors among schoolteachers in Nallur Educational Division, Jaffna

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Background and objective: Timely identification of acute stroke (AS) and acute ischemic heart disease (IHD) symptoms by the public is essential for prompt intervention and better health outcomes. Schoolteachers, due to their role in society, can significantly contribute to raising awareness about early detection and response to the above conditions. This study aimed to assess the level of knowledge regarding early symptoms and risk factors of AS and acute IHD among schoolteachers in the Nallur Educational Division, Jaffna

Methods: An educational institution-based cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among schoolteachers. A proportionate stratified sampling method was used to select 423 teachers. Teachers were chosen randomly using a numerical random number generator. Data were analysed using SPSS. Knowledge levels were categorized as Excellent, Satisfactory, and Poor based on responses to the questionnaire. Chi-square test was used for statistical analysis.

Results: Knowledge regarding AS symptoms among the participants was excellent in 1.9%, satisfactory in 45.8% and poor in 52.2%. Regarding acute IHD symptoms, 2.1% demonstrated excellent knowledge, 50.8% satisfactory knowledge and 47% poor knowledge. With respect to AS risk factors, 14.9% had excellent knowledge, 52.9% satisfactory knowledge, and 32.1% poor knowledge. Regarding IHD risk factors, 17.9% had excellent knowledge, 60.9% satisfactory knowledge, and 21% poor knowledge. Those with a family history of stroke or IHD have higher knowledge levels (p<0.001). Teachers of bioscience-related subjects (science, biology, health science) had significantly higher knowledge compared to those teaching arts and mathematics (p<0.001). Teachers who use books and radio as primary sources of medical information demonstrated better knowledge than those using social media, newspapers, or friends (p<0.001).

Conclusions and recommendations: This study highlights that more than 50% of teachers in the Nallur Education Division have poor knowledge. Further education programmes are needed to improve their awareness so they can effectively disseminate this knowledge to students. Utilizing books and radio as key sources of medical information can enhance knowledge dissemination.

Keywords: Acute Ischemic Heart Disease, Acute Stroke, Recognition of early symptoms, Recognition of risk factors, Jaffna