

Abstract 12:

Knowledge and practice of contraception amongst mothers of children admitted to the paediatric ward in Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Background and objective: Despite the vast number of interventions to provide knowledge and access to contraceptives, both induced abortions and unplanned pregnancies remain high in Sri Lanka. This research aimed to assess the knowledge and practice of contraception amongst mothers of children admitted to the paediatric ward in Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Methods: A hospital-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 359 mothers of children admitted to the paediatric wards in Teaching Hospital Jaffna. The sample was selected using systematic sampling with a sampling interval of 5. Data were collected with an interviewer-administered questionnaire, which contained 16 questions to assess knowledge on commonly available contraceptives (scored 0-16). Chi-square test and the independent t-test were performed on SPSS version 26. Mean scores were compared based on various sociodemographic factors.

Results: In total, 359 women participated (mean age 33.7 years, SD 5.9 years). Although almost all participants were aware of contraceptive methods (n=353, 98.3%), knowledge was poor (mean score 5.82, SD 2.85). Just over half (n=198, 56.1%) of the sample used a contraceptive method. The most common reason for not using contraceptives was fear of side effects (n=56, 35.4%). Among users (n=198), a significant proportion developed side effects (n=71, 35.9%). Only 21 (5.8%) participants had ever used emergency contraceptive methods. There was a significant association between knowledge on contraception and education level (p<0.01), monthly income (p<0.01), and employment status (p<0.05). Those who had studied above O/L, had an income over Rs.75,000 and were employed were more likely to have higher knowledge. Use of contraception was significantly associated with the number of children (p<0.01), monthly income (p<0.05), and education of the partner (p<0.05). Those who had less than 3 children, whose partner had studied above O/L, and monthly income less than Rs. 75,000 were more likely to use contraception.

Conclusions and recommendations: The current study reveals that knowledge on contraceptives is poor among mothers, although a substantial proportion used contraception. Strengthening education, accessibility, and counselling is essential to improve contraceptive knowledge and practice among mothers.

Keywords: Contraceptive methods, Family planning, Knowledge, Practice, Northern Sri Lanka