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Knowledge and attitudes on rational use of antibiotics and awareness on antibiotic resistance among the people attending outpatient department of Divisional hospital Akuressa

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Background: Antibiotic Resistance (ABR) is a threat to health security. Lack of knowledge, poor attitudes, and irrational practices on antibiotic usage of public has contributed to ABR.

Objective: To assess the knowledge and attitudes on rational use of antibiotics and awareness about ABR among people attending Outpatient department of Divisional hospital, Akuressa.

Method: A prospective, descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Akuressa divisional hospital, in Matara Sri Lanka, between August and December 2019. Sample size was 422. Respondents were selected using systematic random sampling. Interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: From 435 respondents, preponderance were females (n=315) while 80.2% were from rural areas. Out of the respondents, 77.8% had used antibiotics within the past year. The majority of respondents (88.7%) obtained antibiotics from doctor/ pharmacist, while 1.8% of them had used leftovers. The majority (78.6%) accepted that they should not share antibiotics and should not demand for antibiotics from doctors (74.7%). Regarding attitudes, 51% of respondents discontinued the antibiotics course once they felt better and they were exclusively from suburban and rural areas. Seventy four percent mentioned that cold and flu can be treated with antibiotics while 84.1% said urinary tract infections cannot be treated with antibiotics. Only 31% heard the term ABR. Half of the population mentioned ABR occurs when the body become resistant to antibiotics. There was a significant association found on knowledge on medical terminology related to antibiotic resistance vs. the educational level of respondents (p value < 0.05).

Conclusion: The people within the selected area the majority being rural, have insufficient knowledge, poor attitudes of rational use of antibiotics and less awareness on ABR according to this study. This further highlights the need of an effective interventions to correct their misconceptions regarding antibiotic use and to increase the awareness of ABR.