

## **Awareness regarding treatment, prevention and control of cutaneous leishmaniasis among medical practitioners in the Colombo South and Jayewardenepura teaching hospitals**

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### **Introduction**

Cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) is an intracellular protozoan parasitic transmitted by the sand fly. Leishmaniasis is a newly emerged and established notifiable disease in Sri Lanka. As CL skin lesions can be misdiagnosed with other skin lesions, it is important for medical practitioners to be able to identify the lesions caused by the parasite.

### **Objectives**

To describe the awareness regarding treatment, prevention and control of leishmaniasis among Medical practitioners at the Colombo South (CSTH) and Sri Jayewardenepura teaching hospitals (SJTH).

### **Methodology**

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out in CSTH and SJTH. Study population was all the medical practitioners a total of 263 which included senior registrars, registrars, senior house officers, resident house officers and house officers. Data was obtained using a pre tested self-administered questionnaire. SPSS software was used for data analysis. Significance was calculated when  $P < 0.05$ .

### **Results**

Out of 263 doctors who participated 244 (92.8%) responded to the questionnaire and majority were from CSTH (77.9%). Mean age was 34 years ( $SD \pm 6.816$ ). Only 68 (27.9%) medical practitioners have seen and treated patients with CL. Most of the doctors stated that sodium stibogluconate (65%) was the drug used to treat the disease, 65.6% were aware about the modes of transmission and 63.9% were aware regarding prevention and control of the disease. Majority (94.3%) knew that the disease was transmitted by the sand fly. There was a statistically significant difference between the current designation and the level of awareness regarding available investigations ( $P < 0.002$ ), treatment modalities ( $P < 0.001$ ), effective drug treatment ( $P < 0.05$ ) and prevention and control ( $P < 0.05$ ).

### **Conclusions and/or recommendations**

Awareness regarding treatment, prevention and control of cutaneous leishmaniasis is inadequate among the medical practitioners. Appropriate referral should be done to a dermatologist if suspected. Continuous medical education on recent emerging infections is mandatory.

**Key words:** cutaneous leishmaniasis, awareness, practices, medical practitioners, Colombo District