

## SUMMARY

Under reporting of notifications is a world wide problem in the prevention of communicable diseases. Developed countries have undertaken several studies to identify the deficiencies of their notification systems and established appropriate methods to achieve their goals in communicable disease control.

Some countries have adopted modern communication equipment such as toll-free telephone reporting systems, and electronic media. Others have implemented less costly methods such as sentinel reporting systems and notification by paid physicians and public health personnel, to develop their notification systems. Expensive systems cannot be adopted in developing countries, hence, they should develop low cost, but effective methods which they can afford.

In Sri Lanka hardly any studies have been conducted to identify deficiencies in the notification system. The principal investigator designed a package of intervention from his previous work on notifications. The intervention had eight components and was implemented for six months in Matara District which was the experimental area. Results of the intervention were compared with the situation in Ratnapura District which was the control area and also with a similar period before the intervention in the experimental area.

It was observed that the number notified from wards in hospitals had increased after the intervention, from 24.1% to 78.8% in the experimental area compared to 15.02% and 16.5% respectively for the two periods in the control area. Investigation of notifications by Public Health Inspectors (PHI) have also increased from 48.9% to 77.4% in the experimental area as a result of the intervention. In the control area it has decreased from 63.6% to 61.5% for the same period. The mean duration taken to investigate a notification by PHII from the date received by MOH had been reduced from 21.1 days to 8.8 days after the intervention in the experimental area whereas it has reduced from 50.9 to 25.3 in the control area.

Knowledge of medical officers regarding notification was poor and after the intervention they had a better knowledge and, they have also changed their attitudes to improved notification. Public Health Inspectors also have improved their knowledge after the intervention but they have not changed their attitudes.

As the intervention is very effective to improve notification and also since it is a simple, flexible and low cost system it should be implemented in the country to achieve goals in communicable disease control.