



ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to determine the incidence rates of pesticide poisoning in an agricultural community and identification of the factors influencing them.

In order to do this, the study was carried out in two different settings, i.e. hospitals and community. In the hospital based study, data was collected over a period of one year to study the characteristics of the patients admitted with a history of poisoning. The community based study comprised, three study groups. They were, chief occupants of a sample of households, a sample of pesticide traders and a sample of Gramaniladharies. The data collection instruments were interviewer administered questionnaires.

An incidence rate of 301.9 per 100,000 population was estimated for the general population. A knowledge score was developed for both the users and the non-users of pesticides and a practice score was developed for the users.

The knowledge and practice were significantly associated with their level of education. Analysis by multiple regression method further revealed that in addition to the level of education, the size of the land, the AGA division where they reside and the age of the individual, were significantly associated with the type of practices of the pesticide users.

The administration of the questionnaire appeared to be a useful, convenient and feasible method of data collection in this type of study.

The findings indicate that immediate remedial measures are needed for the control of the high incidence of suicides,

using pesticides as the means. Practicable intervention programmes should be introduced to prevent the occupational pesticide poisonings, as it was found that practices of pesticide users were not satisfactory unlike their level of knowledge.