

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction-:** Fishing is one of the major occupations worldwide. The identification of the specific health problems of the fishermen is important as they are a special group of community who spend their life both at the sea and the land.

**Objective-:** This study was performed to describe the common health problems among fishermen in the Divisional Secretariat Division of Kalpitiya

**Methodology -:** This study was a community based descriptive cross sectional study done in Divisional Secretariat Division of Kalpitiya. Study was done during the period of August 2011 to October 2011. The sample consisted of 465 fishermen with more than 6 months experience in fishing and the sample was selected from applying the cluster sampling technique. The study instruments were the interviewer administered questionnaire and the record sheet. Prevalence of the health problems of the fishermen with 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) were calculated. Chi square test was applied for the assessment of the associated factors of the health problems. Multivariate logistic regression was applied where necessary and results were expressed with odds ratio and the 95% CI.

**Results -:** The overall prevalence of musculoskeletal symptoms was 61% (95%CI; 56.6% –65.4%). A majority, 175 out of 465 study participants (37.6%) had back pain. The prevalence of skin disorders among the study participants was 24% (95% CI 20.12%-27.88%). Visual symptoms was prevalent among 38.9% (95%CI; 34.5% - 43.3%) of fishermen. According to WHO definition the prevalence of visual impairment, low vision and blindness was 16% (95% CI ; 12.7% -19.3%), 15.1% (95% CI; 11.9%-18.3%) and 0.9%.(95% CI;0.05% –1.75%) respectively. The prevalence of accidental injuries was 19.6% (95%CI ; 16%- 23.2%). Prevalence of hypertension was 24.3% (95% CI; 20.4% -28.2%) and a majority (24.1%) had stage 1 hypertension. The prevalence of the overweight and obesity was 20.6% (95% CI; 16.9%-24.3%) and 2.6% (95% CI; 1.2% - 4%) respectively. The overall prevalence of ever smokers was 56.8% (95% CI ; 52.3% - 61%) and the prevalence of current smokers was 54.6%

(95% CI; 50.2% - 59%). The prevalence of ever alcoholics was 60.9% (95% CI ; 56.5% -65.3%) and the prevalence of current drinkers was 60.2% (95% CI ; 55.8%- 64.6%) .

**Conclusion -:** Visual impairment, hypertension, smoking and consumption of alcohol were more prevalent among the fishermen in the Divisional Secretariat Division of Kalpitiya than the national figures of the general population.

**Recommendations -:** An analytical study is recommended to identify risk factors of the health problems among fishermen.

**Key words-:** Fishermen, Health problems