

THE ABSTRACT

School-based health promotion which encompasses the strategies of Ottawa charter, declared by the first international conference of health promotion, can address many future health challenges. The school is the most appropriate setting to promote the health of younger generation of the nation.

Understandings of the concept and attitudes on school-based health promotion in coordinating teachers were reported to be a key to develop school-based health promotion programme. A descriptive cross-sectional study and supplementary qualitative study was carried out to describe the understandings of concept and attitudes on school-based health promotion among teachers coordinating school health clubs in Colombo DPDHS area. Further the study describes perceived obstacles to develop school health programme by coordinating teachers.

Data were collected from 143 coordinating teachers in eleven Medical Officers of Health areas using a self administrated questionnaire. The supplementary qualitative study was comprised of six in depth interviews. The data were analyzed using percentages, except in few occasions where either Chi- square test or Z- test was applied.

The basic data revealed that the coordinating teachers were mostly females and have wide age distribution. The majority of coordinating teachers were trained teachers. The majority of coordinating teachers have participated in one or two health related training programmes, while substantial percentage of them have not participated single such a programme.

In general the understandings on concept of school-based health promotion among coordinating teachers was good. However, the teachers' ability to apply the understandings onto practical context was average. Further, the understandings related to school health policy, healthy psychosocial environment and personal skill development seems to be lower compared to that of healthy physical environment, community participation for health, and integrated school health service. It would be

useful to acknowledge development of competencies of coordinating teachers to apply the understandings on the concept of school-based health promotion, in the practical context.

The greater majority of coordinating teachers possess more favorable attitudes on school-based health promotion. The coordinating teachers with more favorable attitudes were having well functioning school health clubs. However, the relationship between favorability of attitudes and understandings on concept of school-based health promotion was not described.

The perceived obstacles to develop school health programme among coordinating teachers were assessed in areas of resources, community participation, partnership building, policy, and programme planning process. According to coordinating teachers' perception most important obstacles to develop school health programme were inadequate allocation of time, lack of parent participation and community involvement for school health and unavailability of proper monitoring and evaluation system to school health programme.