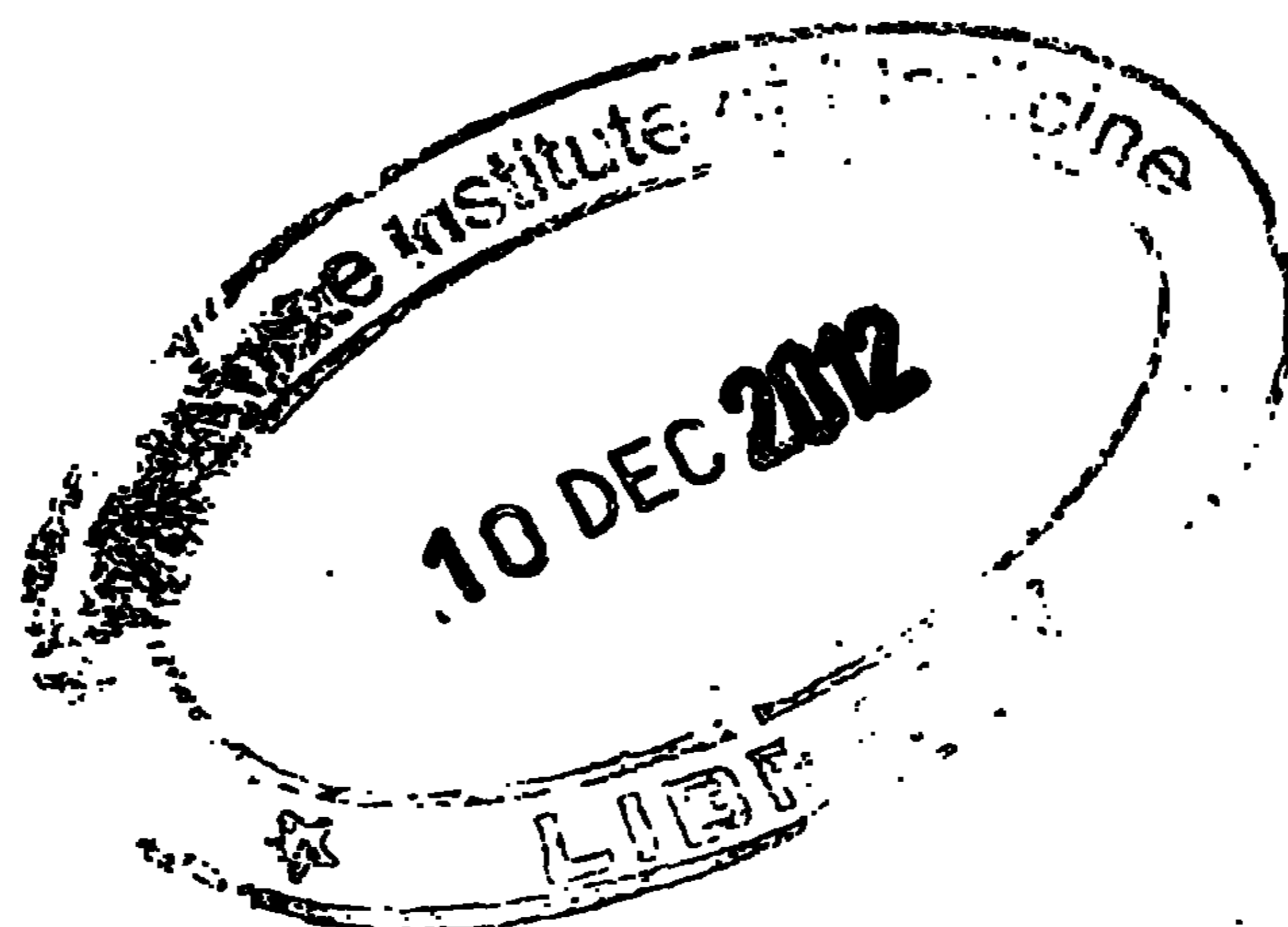


## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Transport is a vital factor concerning development of a country. Assessment of fitness for driving is an essential component in ensuring safety in the transport system. Medical condition or effect of treatment may deteriorate the driving capacity. Assessment of fitness for light vehicle driving in Sri Lanka is at present performed by the General Practitioners who certifies the fitness by issuing Medical Certificates of Fitness (MCFs). This study is aimed at examining the GPs' knowledge, attitudes and practices of issuing MCFs and factors associated with knowledge. Results of this study will be used for planning programmes on improving accuracy of MCFs issued by GPs.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 385 GPs in Colombo district. A purposive sample of GPs who had issued MFCs during the period of 6 months prior to the study were traced and included in the study. The study units were subjected to an interviewed administered questionnaire formulated with the opinions of supervisors and experts. All the interviews were conducted by the principal investigator himself. Analysis of the data was done by using SPSS computer software package. Factors associated with the knowledge on issuing MCF were assessed by cross tabulating the factors with levels of knowledge and by applying statistical tests where applicable.



**Results:** A response rate of 69.9% (306/438) was achieved. The majority of the study population (52.9%, n=162), were in the 36-45 age group. There were 88.2 %, n=270 with the MBBS qualification.

The study showed that overall knowledge among the GPs on assessing medical fitness to drive light vehicles was poor (69%, n=211). There was misunderstanding of GPs in certain aspects of knowledge. As a result, GPs declined to issue MFCs to the clients who had a history of fits (31.7%, 97), a high random blood sugar level (47.4%,n=145) and the maximum limit of the distant vision (42.8%, n=131). Assessing the factors associated with knowledge the study found that a significantly higher proportion of GPs who had received reading materials and experience in the Anesthesia had a good level of knowledge than those who have not (p<0.05)

A majority of GPs (80.3%, n=246) strongly agreed that the verifying of age and name by checking the identity card must always be performed. There were 82 %, (n=251) GPs who were strongly agreed that they will benefit if training by NTMI provided the correct procedure for issue of MCF.

There were 63.7% (n=195) GPs who said that they never check RBS for issuing of MCF. A majority of GPs (54.6,n=167) had never used Snellen chart to check distant vision.

A majority of the GPs had favorable attitudes for improving the MCF issuing system. Most of the practices were not up to the standard. Overall practice of the majority of the GPs was not correct.

**Conclusions and recommendations:** A majority of the GPs' knowledge levels on issuing MFCs for light vehicle drivers was poor. Receipt of reading materials was associated with better knowledge. Gaps were also identified in attitudes and practices related to issuing of MFCs. Planning and implementation of proper educational and training programs to improve their knowledge, attitudes and practices is recommended.

Information generated from this study can be utilized by the NTMI to formulate Standard Operation Procedure for issuing MFCs for light vehicle driving and monitor how MFCs for light vehicles are being issued by the GPs.