

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Psychological distress has been identified as a significant problem in current context of world. It has multiple consequences which will causes deterioration of quality of life such as depressive disorders, adjustment disorders, anxiety disorders etc. Fisheries community was one of major contributory work force for national gross production. Spouses of fishermen are the key role in their house holds while husbands were away for their occupation. They have undergone various strenuous situations and therefor they were vulnerable to get psychological distress more.

Objectives

The study was conducted to determine the prevalence of psychological distress and its associated factors among spouses of Fishermen in Fisheries District, Negombo.

Methods

Community based cross sectional study was conducted among spouses of Fishermen in Fisheries District, Negombo. Primary cluster unit was Grama Niladhari Division (GN) and it was selected by using cluster sampling method. All the Grama Niladhari Divisions were listed out according to the alphabetical order and 16 GN divisions were selected by simple random sampling method to obtained the 305 sample size. Interviewer administered questionnaire were used for data collection including Kessler psychological distress scale. Cutoff level for Kessler scale were taken as 12 to detect the psychological distress and association was analyzed by using Chi square test and Odds ratio. Level of significance was taken as .05.

Results

Response rate was 97%(N=296). Prevalence of psychological distress among spouses of fishermen was found as 32.4%(n=96,95% CI-27.1-37.3). Statistically associated sociodemographic factors with psychological distress among women were age more than 34 years, civil status of non-legally married but living together, education level of grade five or below and presence of economic difficulties. Statistically significant associated spouse related factors were educated up to or below the grade five and illnesses of husband. Children related factors which are statistically significance were having more than two children, having single younger children (age less than 10 years), having children who were schooling and to be schooling, having children who were educated in

above grade six, having unemployed children in the family and uncertainty regarding future of children. Not living with parents and experience of death of relative during last year also found as statistically significant association with psychological distress among the sample. Psychological distress was statistically significantly associated with women's who were having husbands faced accidents during the occupation time.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Prevalence of psychological distress among spouses of fishermen was 32% and it was higher than the prevalence among reproductive age group. There for health care providers should be expand the availability of services on diagnosis of mental illnesses as well as treatment centers at their community. Majority of statistically significant associated factors were related with the children. Major reason for this may be due to they were held children responsibilities while husbands were away. There for further studies should be done to established the temporality of association.

Key words: psychological distress, prevalence, associated factors, spouses of Fishermen