

# Abstract

## Introduction

Sri Lanka has taken many steps proactively to curtail the use of alcohol and tobacco including the increase in taxes, media promotions and enacting the Alcohol and Tobacco Act. Mass media is considered as a leading method of conveying information to the society in either way of promoting and demoting of alcohol and tobacco use. However, the Alcohol and Tobacco Act paved the way for adopting many preventive strategies and the media publicity being controlled is one strategy adopted. Even though Sri Lankan media stations have no separate medical journalists, all the producers and editors use health information in their productions. Knowing the level of knowledge on health effects and legislation on tobacco and alcohol and perception on using media productions for health promotion among them is valuable for further actions on demoting alcohol and tobacco use in Sri Lanka.

## Objective.

The objective of the study was to determine knowledge on health effects and legislations on tobacco and alcohol, associated factors for the level of knowledge and perception on using media productions for health promotion related to alcohol and tobacco among producers and editors of government media stations.

## Methodology

A cross sectional survey was conducted in government owned media stations in Sri Lanka including Sri Lanka Rupavahini Cooperation, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation, Independence Television Network and Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited. As per record there are 273 editors and producers of the government media stations. Hence the total population included. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Data analysis was carried out using the appropriate statistical methods in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.

## Results

The response rate was 100.0%. Age of the participant was ranged from 21 years to 64 years. Majority of the sample consisted of males (n=173, 63.4%), Sinhalese (n=248, 90.8%) and Buddhists (n=252, 92.3%). Almost half of the population 48.7% (n=133) were degree holders. Majority of the study participants were from television sector (n=188, 68.9%). Out of respondents, 28.6% (n= 78) had been diagnosed with at least one non communicable disease. Almost two thirds 65.9% (n=180)

of participants had a family member with a NCD. It was noted that 42.5% (n=116) were current consumers of alcohol at the time of study. Further 79.1% (n =216) of participants have never smoked. The overall mean of level of knowledge was 20.56 (95% CI = 16.31 to 24.81) from score of 40.

In this study age of the participants (p=0.027) and Personal alcohol consumption (p=0.045) were significantly associated with the level of knowledge. However monthly income, ethnicity, work place, personal and family NCD history and personal smoking of the participants were not significantly associated with level of knowledge.

### **Perception**

Favorable perception was found on topics like usage of mass media as a health promotional material, health promotion as a responsibility of media professional and media stations, using non health programmes for health promotion and changing attitude of the public. However stems on personal knowledge, target population of media productions and influence of sponsors for health promotion gave relatively unfavorable perception.

### **Conclusion and recommendation.**

Among the participants nearly 50% had poor total knowledge. There is a need to strengthen existing educational programmes, introduce and implement new training programmes and health information system considering unique characteristics in this community.

### **Keywords**

Alcohol, Tobacco and Media