

ABSTRACT

Objectives

The study was conducted to assess Knowledge and Practices against the acts of bioterrorism among health care workers at Base Hospital Rikillagaskada in Nuwaraeliya District.

Methodology

A cross sectional descriptive study was carried out to meet the above objective. All 121 doctors and nursing officers in this institution were included in the study. The study instrument was a pre tested self-administered questionnaire and a check list. The level of knowledge and practices were assessed using a scoring system.

Results

The response rate of the study was 86.7%. The mean age was 3.7 ± 7.75 years with a female preponderance (64.8%). The mean age of work experience was 12.5 ± 8.2 . According to this study sample 60% had adequate knowledge on bioterrorism while 40% had inadequate knowledge. Level of knowledge was adequate in the health care workers more than 45years.. According to this study males (81.1%) showed good knowledge level compared to females. Doctors had adequate knowledge (80.6%) compared with nursing officers. Knowledge on bioterrorism was statistically significant associated with following socio demographic factors.

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| Age | P=0.026 |
| Gender | P=0.001 |
| Professional category (doctor or nursing officer) | P=0.002 |
| Current working place | P=0.025 |

In this study setting almost all (100%) used face mask when seeing the patients. Majority (81.3%) of them used face shield. 81.3% used separate equipment like

stethoscopes,thermometers when examine the patients. Very few of them (37.5%) used sanitizer/hand washing before and after seeing the patients. Among this sub group 59.4% had good practices while 40.6% had poor practices against bioterrorism acts.

Males (84.6%) had good practices compared with females (42.1%). At the same time doctors and nursing officers had good practices in equal percentages.

Conclusion

Majority of Doctors and nursing officers in Base Hospital Rikillagaskada were less than 40 years of age. (57.5%). Mean age was 39.3.Almost all were Sinhala Buddhists. They showed a female predominance (64.8%). Majority of nurses and doctors were having more than 10yr experience in practice. The mean of work experience was 12. 5years.Out of the study group 60% had adequate knowledge on bioterrorism and only 40% had inadequate knowledge on bioterrorism. Knowledge on bioterrorism was statistically significantly associated with following socio demographic factors.. Overall response practices for bioterrorism in this institutional and individual were satisfactory. Males had good practices compared with females. At the same time doctors and nursing officers had good practices in equal percentages.

Recommendations

The public health diagnostic and preventive measures should be trained to curative sector health care workers. Regular training and drills need to be done in health care institution as a preparedness for bioterrorism. The reasons for male gender having adequate knowledge and practices on bioterrorism need to be further evaluated. Considering Covid/bioterrorism practices need to be more stringent. Need further evaluations

Key words ; Knowledge and practices, Bioterrorism, Health care workers in Sri Lanka.