

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Food poisoning has become a common public health problem in Sri Lanka in recent years due to the rapid transition of food preparation and consumption patterns. Large scale food poisoning incidents have been reported among garment factory workers in many districts in the country. Therefore, garment factory workers should be empowered with adequate knowledge and good practices about the prevention of food poisoning.

Objective

To assess the knowledge and practices on food poisoning and its prevention among workers in a selected garment factory in the district of Colombo.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on 200 participants in a selected garment factory in the district of Colombo, Sri Lanka. A self-administered questionnaire was used as the study instrument to collect data on knowledge and practices on food poisoning and its prevention. A descriptive data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software. A scoring system was formed, and marks were given according to the responses in the questionnaire considering correct and positive responses. A total score was calculated both for knowledge and practice components separately. Marks more than the 50th percentile were considered satisfactory whereas marks below the 50th percentile were considered unsatisfactory for both knowledge and practices components. In this way, the level of knowledge and practices on food poisoning and its prevention were assessed.

Results

The majority of the study participants were females (n=140), representing 73.3% of the total. Out of the 191 participants 185 were Sinhalese. (96.9%)

Of the total, 51.3% of the factory workers (n=98) had a satisfactory level of knowledge and the majority of the workers (60.2%, n=115) had a satisfactory level of practice on food poisoning and its prevention. However, the results showed a lack of knowledge of some commonly concerning factors of food poisoning such as diseases transmitted by food, common food items that cause food poisoning, and some basic knowledge on food safety.

Conclusion and recommendation

Although the garment factory workers in this selected garment factory in Colombo district had a satisfactory level of knowledge and practices towards food poisoning and its prevention, there was a lack of knowledge regarding some main factors of food poisoning and its prevention.

This emphasizes the need for effective educational programs and or distribution of health education materials to improve the knowledge and practices on food poisoning and prevention of it among this population.