

Abstract

Introduction: Around 2/3 of global deaths are due to NCDs. Vast majority of these are due to CVDs, DM, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases. NCDs which can be prevented by healthy lifestyles, rank the first ten causes of premature death in Sri Lanka also. Promoting healthy lifestyles (HLS) via MSGs is one of the strategies in SL. This study's findings will feed into the present community-based program of HLS in Jaffna district.

Objective: To determine the HLS practices and its association with participation in Mothers' Support Group and other factors of HLS among clinic attending mothers in the Chavakachcheri MOH area

Methods: A clinic-based cross-sectional study was conducted in 19 centres covering 28 PHM areas in the Chavakachcheri MOH area in the Jaffna district using pre-tested interviewer-administered questionnaire from September to October 2020. Systematic sampling was used to recruit 422 mothers who visited the above clinics. Descriptive statistics, chi-squared test and Odds Ratios were used to analyze the data. **Results:** Mean age of the respondents was 30 years (SD=5.6). Majority (96.7%, n=408) were Sri Lankan Tamils, Hindus (88.4%, n=373) and legally married (95%, n=404). All got the formal education & 97.4% had studied up to \geq grade 6. More than half of the mothers got an average (family) monthly income between Rs.25000 and 50000. More than 25% (n=111) of the mothers were aware about the MSG and only 60 ever participated in the MSG meetings. Only 24.8% (n=105) of mothers were practicing HLS. Around 83% (n=350) expressed they have been trained regarding the health promotion related activities by staff and PHM participated in all the training programmes. Around 77% of participants got low scores in perception towards HLS. Majority (n=236, 55.9%) had a BMI \geq 23kg/m² and 35.1% (n=148) had a BMI \geq 25kg/m².

'Participation in MSG meeting', 'Perception on HLS practices', 'BMI \geq 23kg/m²' and 'BMI \geq 25kg/m²' were found statistically significant association with HLS practices in bivariate analysis and none of the socio-demographic or socio-economic factors were found a statistical association. Participation in MSG meeting [OR=0.11 (0.03-0.35)], perception on HLS practices [OR=3.67 (1.20-11.17)] and BMI \geq 25kg/m² [OR=7.72 (1.84-32.36)] had statistically significant in the final logistic regression model.

Conclusions and recommendations: Practices of healthy living among participants were poor. HLS practices had statistically significant association with participation in MSG meetings. There were statistically significant associations between overall HLS practices and the participation in MSG meetings, perception regarding the HLS and BMI \geq 25kg/m² on multivariate analysis. It is recommended to address the gap between

the training programmes and perception & practices related to HLS using comparative studies or case-control studies or intervention studies.

Key words: Healthy lifestyle, Mothers' Support Group, practices, MOH area, participation, Jaffna district.