

Abstract

Introduction

Childhood injuries are a growing global public health problem. Unintentional injuries significantly contribute to mortality and morbidity among children, however, most of these can be predicted or avoided. Primary school setting is an injury vulnerable place and teachers have a responsibility to ensure child safety practicing primary and secondary preventive methods of injuries. Research undertaken to assess teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices are few and far between in Sri Lanka.

Objective

The aim of this study was to describe the knowledge, attitudes, practices and correlates of practices related to children's common unintentional injuries prevention among government sector primary school teachers of Kalutara district.

Method

This was a school based descriptive cross sectional study. Multistage cluster sampling method was adopted and final sample size of 680 was distributed among three educational zones of Kalutara district (Kalutara, Matugama and Horana) according to the probability proportionate to size. A pre tested self-administered questionnaire administered by trained data collectors was used as the study instrument and it was prepared in all three languages of Sinhala, Tamil and English. Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 25.

Results Response rate was 94.2% (n=641). Majority of participants were married (95.8%) females (92.7%) who have completed tertiary education after Advanced Level (56.7%) and most them were above 40 years old (36%). Majority had a good knowledge on primary prevention of falls (74.4%), choking (98.9%), animal bites (98.0%), cut injury (87.2%), burns (65.2%) and electrocution (96.1%) and also had good knowledge of secondary prevention for choking (61.6%), animal bite (95.3%), burns (88%) and electrocution (73.6%). But only 21.8% and 36% of participants had good knowledge of secondary prevention of falls and cut injury respectively. Knowledge on basic life support was poor among majority of 92.7% participants. But all the teachers (n=641) had favorable attitudes towards injury prevention.

According to the study, both risks and injury situations of falls were common compared to choking, animal bite, cut injury, burn and electrocution among primary school children.

Risk identification of falls were significantly associated with type of school, gender, service period as a teacher, service period at present station, stay in the class at interval, participation of first aid sessions and knowledge of primary prevention of falls and it was not associated with training in teaching. First aid administration was significantly associated only with gender. Service period as a teacher, training in teaching, stay in the class at interval, participation of first aid sessions and knowledge of secondary prevention of falls were not associated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings knowledge, attitudes and practices of primary prevention including risk identification and taking action are satisfactory compared to secondary prevention including first aid administration for common unintentional injuries. Arrangement of first aid training, inclusion of unintentional injury prevention into teacher training curricula and focus on environmental risk mitigation are recommended to improve unintentional injury prevention among primary school children.

Key words: Childhood unintentional injuries, Primary school teachers, Injury prevention