

Abstract

Background: Childhood anaemia is a common health problem worldwide. Here, we aim to describe the maternal knowledge and practices on childhood anaemia among mothers of children under five years in the Gampaha district.

Methods: We performed a cross-sectional descriptive study in Gampaha district from December 2020 to February 2021. One immunisation clinic each from four Medical Officer of Health areas in the district was selected using stratified random sampling. Parents of all children aged between 6 months to 5 years attending clinics were recruited until the sample size is achieved. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire and analysed using multiple logistic regression. Ethics approval was obtained from Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians.

Results: A total of 392 mothers were recruited; 53% of their children were males. Only 131(33.4%) mothers had an accurate understanding of anaemia, while only 278(70.9%) and 113(28.8%) respectively could name at least one symptom and two causes of anaemia. 49(12.5%) could not name a single food rich in iron. Accurate understanding of anaemia was associated with maternal age over thirty years [OR=1.73(1.03-2.89);p<0.05] and maternal education level beyond grade ten [OR=3.20(1.90-5.40);p<0.001] whereas higher knowledge on symptoms of anaemia was associated with maternal employment [OR=2.39(1.31-4.37);p<0.01]. Acceptance of multiple micronutrient supplements was higher among mother with accurate understanding of anaemia [OR=1.68(1.08-2.60);p<0.05].

Conclusions: The knowledge of anaemia was higher among mothers who are older than thirty years, educated beyond grade ten and employed. Mothers with accurate understanding of anaemia showed better compliance with multiple micronutrient supplements.