

Abstract

Introduction: People of the modern era are extremely dependent on the use of electricity in their day to day life. Despite its importance, it is often dangerous if electricity is not used safely by its consumers. Therefore, it is mandatory that safe practices are adopted when using electricity and electrical appliances for preventing electrical hazards.

General objective: To describe the safe use of electricity and electrical appliances in households among school teachers in Gampaha district and its relationship with their knowledge on electrical hazards/safety measures and socio-demographic characteristics.

Methods: A cross sectional analytical study was conducted among 139 school teachers selected from 5 schools in Gampaha district, Sri Lanka. Teachers were selected in a consecutive manner using the attendance register. A self-administered, pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data on; demographic and socio-economic characteristics; practices related to safe use of electricity and electrical appliances in households; knowledge on hazards and safety measures. Significance of factors associated with practices was assessed using chi square test.

Results: Majority of the teachers consisted of females (n=116; 82.9 %). A total of (n=104; 74.8%) teachers have been educated beyond school level. The monthly income of (n=125; 89.3%) teachers was in the category of Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000. Majority of the teachers (n=115; 82.1%) lived in their own house. A total of (n=121; 87.1%) teachers followed good practices in relation to safe use of electricity and (n=119; 85.6%) teachers in relation to electrical appliances. A total of (n=77; 57.4%) teachers showed good knowledge on hazards and safety measures.

Associations of poor practice in relation to safe use of electricity were; being male; age >40 years; education level of beyond school level; monthly income less than Rs 50,000; currently taught subjects are related to science and good knowledge on hazards/safety measures, of which, being male and monthly income < Rs 50,000 per month were significant.

Associations of poor practices in relation to safe use of electrical appliances were; being male; age ≤ 40 years; educational level beyond school, monthly income more than Rs 50,000; subjects

currently taught are not related to science and poor knowledge on hazards and safety measures. None of the above factors were significant.

Conclusion: Teachers showed relatively good knowledge and practices (>50%) on the safe use of electricity and appliances. Males and low income showed vulnerability for poor electricity practices.

Recommendations: Educating the society especially for low income men, generic brochure for appliances in local language and registration of electricians are recommended.

Key words: Electricity, Electrical appliances, Safe use, Awareness on hazards and safety measures