

## **Abstract**

### **Introduction**

Different kinds of distressing events happen in the world causing a wide range of reactions and feelings. Psychological first aid (PFA) is humane supportive response for suffering. All health workers especially PHMs who play a major role as first responders in a disaster should be able provide basic PFA effectively. Aim of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitudes and associated factors on the provision of PFA among PHMs during disasters.

### **General Objective**

To assess the knowledge, attitudes and its associated factors on the provision of psychological first aid during response to disasters among public health midwives in Colombo RDHS area.

### **Methods**

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out among 307 Public Health Midwives in Colombo RDHS area. All SPHMs and PHMs of the area who were in service were taken as the study population. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire.

### **Results**

In the study population, 86.6% (n=266) of the respondents were aware of the term "Psychological first aid" while 13.4% (n=41) were not aware. The total knowledge score was good in majority 85.4%(n=262) of the respondents while only 14.3%(n=45) had a poor knowledge on PFA. There was statistically significant difference in relation to the level of education with the total knowledge score.

Comprehensive desirable attitudes towards PFA was low(30.61%, n=94). However majority of the respondents (81.10%, n=249 ) had positive attitudes towards the importance of giving PFA in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Six to nine years of work experience was associated with positive attitudes. However, there was no statistically significant difference of attitudes in relation to the profession, religion, place of work, level of education and in



relation to the overall knowledge score. According to the study only a less than quarter (21.82%,( n = 67 ) of the study population had received training on PFA. More than half (56%, n=172) of the respondents had experience in responding to disasters.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The overall knowledge and attitudes were found to be satisfactory. However it is important to improve the knowledge level of the PHMs by providing training and workshops on PFA. Development of a public health awareness program on PFA will also be important.