

Abstract

Introduction

Flood and landslides are the most frequent and most economically vulnerable disasters in Sri Lanka. All disasters are physical and psychological traumatic incidents for affected personnel and may give rise to mental health issues. Even though it is known that it may give rise to mental health issues, very little weight is given to psychological first aid (PFA) during the management of disasters.

Objectives

To identify potential non-psychotic psychiatric disorders among those who were displaced following 2017 May flash flood and landslides in Ayagama MOH area.

Methods

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study including 280 individuals aged between 18 to 75 years from those who resided in displaced camps during 2017 flood and landslides in Ayagama MOH area. The sampling was done by cluster sampling technique. Pre-tested self-administrated questionnaires, including Sinhala translated GHQ30 and PTSD checklist (PCL- 5) was used to collect data. Data were processed and analyzed by using SPSS 20.

Results

In this population male female ratio was 2:3; literacy rate 94% and labour force participation rate 49.2%.

42.5% of the study population resided in a displaced camp due to risk of landslides. 27.5% of the population was still displaced from their original homes and 12.1% of them are still at camps and temporary shelters in Sinhalegoda and Gawaragiriya GS divisions. Among this population only 24.7% has physical or physiological damage due to this disaster and 41.2 % of them had partially or totally damaged their houses.

The point prevalence of potential non-psychotic psychiatric disorders and PTSD were 10.4% and 22.5% respectively.

Conclusions

The potential non-psychotic psychiatric disorders prevalence is lesser than other natural disaster affected communities. The PTSD prevalence is more or less similar to 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami affected of the country, but it is higher than other natural disaster affected in other regional countries. There is no statistically proven relationship between Socio-demographic factors with prevalence of potential non-psychotic psychiatric disorders and PTSD.

Recommendations

It is recommended by this research to establish organized Psychological First Aid services during disaster relief activities and to build community resilience.

Key words: displaced, flood, non-psychotic psychiatric disorders, PTSD,