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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Influenza pandemics are unpredictable and the impact may be imminent if not prepared. Nursing officers (NOs) as frontline health care workers are expected to play a key role in the prevention and control of the disease while they themselves carry a risk of contracting.

Assessing nursing officer's knowledge and preparedness and institutional preparedness helps administrators to identify gaps in preparedness for responding potential pandemics.

Objectives

To determine the knowledge, preparedness and factors associated with pandemic Influenza (PI) among nursing officers at National Hospital Sri Lanka (NHSL) and Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH) and to describe institutional preparedness.

Methods

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out in CSTH and NHSL with a sample of 422 among NOs attach to medical, pediatric, gynecology and obstetrics wards, medical ICU, OPD, ETU, infection control units. Sample was selected by multistage stratified systematic sampling. Self-administered questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge and preparedness of nursing officers' and check list was used to assess institutional preparedness.

Results

A total of 392 NOs responded of whom 98% were females. Overall knowledge of pandemic influenza was poor in 52.3% (n=206) of participants. Younger age, less working experience, not received PIP trainings were significantly associated with poor knowledge. Majority (85.2%) of NOs was ready to comply with routine preventive measures and it was significantly associated with knowledge of PI. Over 61.7% perceived that training on infection control was inadequate. More than 61% perceived that they were personally prepared to respond pandemic influenza. The Institutional preparedness was at a higher level. Perceived preparedness was associated with knowledge on PI, risk perception and training on PIP. Projected duty reporting was satisfactory in all situations expect when family member is contracted with PI. Inappropriate working behaviors were noted which would link with transmission of the disease

Conclusion

Despite inadequate knowledge, the majority was ready to comply with routine preventive measures and was prepared to respond influenza pandemics. Institutions were also had high level of preparedness. Targeted education on appropriate use of personal protective equipment and appropriate working behaviors are needed to strengthen the response of influenza pandemic