

## **Abstract**

This is a study to assess the knowledge and training needs in primary trauma care of mass burn casualties of medical officers of selected units of Colombo South Teaching Hospital. This descriptive cross-sectional survey aimed to describe the socio-demographic profile of the medical officers of the sample population and to assess their level of knowledge and training needs in primary trauma care of mass burn casualties.

The study consisted of a total of 68 medical officers from the Accident Service Unit, Anaesthesia unit, Surgery unit and Emergency Treatment Unit.

Results showed that 25 (36.8%) of the medical officers had very good knowledge, i.e. percentage score  $\geq 75\%$ , while 39 (57.4%) of the medical officers had satisfactory knowledge, i.e. percentage scores between 50 and 75. Analysis of the scores for the sub-sections of the knowledge test showed that a considerable number of doctors scored poorly in the following areas: chemical burns (no=18, 26.5%), triage (no=16, 23.5%), admission criteria for burns (no=1, 16.2%), and primary survey-ABCDE (no=10, 14.7%).

Analysis of the Training needs section showed that there were 9 tasks that more than 25% of the sample population required training in: needle thoracotomy (50%), suprapubic catheterization (42.6%), central vein cannulation (39.7%), admission of burn victims under admission criteria/guidelines (35.3%), rapid initiation of fluid resuscitation in burn victims (30.9%), use of rapid fluid infusers (28%), use of blood/fluid warmers (28%), decontamination of victims with chemical burns (27.9%) and being mindful of nutrition of a burn patient (25%).

In light of these results, it is clear that there is requirement for refresher courses/lectures and/or the implementation of regular in-service training programs for several aspects of primary trauma care such as central vein cannulation, suprapubic catheterization, endotracheal intubation and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation; and burn management such as burn admission guidelines, fluid resuscitation and chemical burns. There is also a need for better familiarization with equipment commonly used in the management of burn trauma patients such as rapid fluid infusers and blood/fluid warmers.