

ABSTRACT

Background:

Infection prevention and control (IPC) is essential for safe dental healthcare delivery because dental procedures involve exposure to blood, saliva, and aerosols, creating potential risks of cross-infection and occupational exposure.

Objective:

To assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to IPC among dental healthcare workers in Primary Medical Care Units and Divisional Hospitals in Kalutara District, Sri Lanka.

Methods:

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among dental healthcare workers in 17 Primary Medical Care Units and 12 Divisional Hospitals in Kalutara District. Data were collected from 94 participants using a structured self-administered questionnaire, inventory checklist, and observational checklist. Knowledge, attitudes, and practices were assessed using predefined scoring criteria. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and the chi-square test in SPSS version 23.

Results:

Most participants (94.7%) demonstrated a moderate level of IPC knowledge, while 73.4% had a positive attitude towards IPC. Good IPC practices were reported by 84.0% of participants. Compliance was high with glove and face-mask use, whereas the use of protective eyewear and face shields was comparatively low. Most participants had completed Hepatitis B vaccination. Heavy workload, inadequate availability of personal protective equipment, and inconvenience associated with IPC measures were identified as important barriers to effective implementation.

Conclusion:

Although dental healthcare workers demonstrated generally positive attitudes and good IPC practices, their knowledge was predominantly at a moderate level.

Strengthening IPC education, ensuring adequate PPE availability, and improving institutional support and supervision are necessary to further enhance IPC in dental healthcare settings.

Keywords: Infection prevention and control; dental healthcare workers; knowledge; attitudes; practices; occupational safety; Sri Lanka.