

Knowledge and practices regarding oral cancer and self-examination of the mouth and risk assessment for oral cancer in individuals above 30 years of age in divisional secretariat Kesbewa, Sri Lanka

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Background: Oral cancer has emerged as a significant global public health concern. The incidence of oral cancers in Sri Lanka is high compared to other South Asian countries (WHO cancer country profile 2014). As stated in the National cancer control program 2010, out of all cancers registered, 10.3% were reported to be oral cancers. It has the highest rate of mortality among cancers (National cancer registry, 2010). According to cancer incident data 2014, oral cancers are the leading cancers among male in Sri Lanka (National cancer control programme, 2014).

Objectives: The main objective is to determine the knowledge and practices regarding examination of the mouth. Also, to assess the risk habits and precancerous lesions in individuals above 30 years of age in divisional secretariat Kesbewa.

Methods: Community based, descriptive cross-sectional study carried out at Kesbewa divisional secretariat area for 170 individuals with interview administered questionnaire after an informed consent and ethical clearance. Information retrieved includes socio demographic data, knowledge regarding practice of mouth self-examination, practices related to risk habits of oral cancer and risk assessment regarding pre-cancerous lesions related to oral cancer. Responses were analyzed by SPSS 23.

Results: Response rate was 96.4% (164 participants). Among them, 99 (60.3%) were males and 65 (39.6%) were females. 110 (67.0%) participants were in 30-54 age category. 97.5% of the sample showed poor knowledge related to mouth self-examination practice and there was no significant association between socio demographic data and mouth self-examination practice. According to the risk assessment 34 (20.7%) males and 6 (3.6%) females were smoking, 35 (21.3%) males and 4 (2.4%) females were chewing beetles, 39 (23.7%) males and 2 (1.2%) females were consuming alcohol. There were 9 (5.4%) participants identified with pre-cancerous lesions identified through self-examination of mouth performed by the interviewers.

Conclusion: Majority of the participants had poor knowledge related to mouth self-examination practice and most of the participants were identified with risk practices related to oral cancer. Its portrait the requirement of proper health education and health promotion interventions in community.