

Attitudes, Knowledge and Practices among Medical Students Regarding Medical Management of Displaced People Following a Disaster

Sajeev S.*, Samarakoon S.M.D.W. , Samalai K.*****

Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka
E-mail: sajeevshellvacumar@gmail.com

Background

Natural disasters are common in Sri Lanka which affect a lot of people and displace from their own residence and make them reside in temporary shelters with other people. Therefore they are prone to certain health problems including physical, mental and social health aspects. A lot of health camps are conducted to medically manage these health issues faced by the displaced people. Involving medical students in such programmes may be helpful to carry out these programmes effectively.

Aims & Objectives

To assess the attitudes, knowledge and practices amongst medical students regarding medical management of displaced people following a disaster in order to involve them effectively in such health camps.

Material & Methods

At faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, a descriptive cross sectional study was carried out among 152 medical students who were selected by cluster sampling. 51% & 49% of them are in fourth year and third year respectively. Final year students were excluded because they may not have time to participate in such camps. A self administered questionnaire was given to assess attitudes, knowledge and practices regarding medical management of displaced people following a disaster. Questionnaire was marked using a scoring system prepared by the researchers. SPSS software was used to analyze the data and chi square was used to compare the two batches.

Results

Most medical students identify that it is their responsibility (91%) to participate in medical management camps organized for displaced people and show willingness (86.2%) to get involved in such programmes. Majority of the students have good knowledge regarding presentation (87.5%), & mode of transmission (97.4%) of common communicable diseases that may occur among people when they are living as a part of the displaced population in temporary shelters in a common area. 53.3% of the students have good knowledge about stress reactions that may occur acutely and later following such disasters and are capable of identifying people with stress reactions. 90.8% of the study population identifies the coping strategies to reduce stress reactions among displaced people. Majority of the students (72.4%) have good knowledge of the theoretical aspects of wounds & their management. 48.7%, 43.1% & 47.1% of the study population have satisfactory level of practices in performing routine, wound related and life saving procedures respectively. Fourth year medical students show better knowledge in identifying people with stress, wound management and also possess better level of practice in performing procedures.

Conclusions

Medical students have good attitudes, knowledge and possess some practices regarding medical management of displaced people following disaster. It is helpful to carry out effective post disaster medical camps including the third and fourth year medical students who possess adequate knowledge and skills regarding medical management of displaced people.

Keywords: Disaster; Medical management; Medical students.