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KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, PRACTICE AND THEIR ASSOCIATION ON PREVENTION OF LEPTOSPIROSIS AMONG ADULT PADDY CULTIVATING FARMERS IN BULATHSINHALA MOH AREA

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Background: Leptospirosis is an emerging zoonotic disease in Sri Lanka, caused by the *Leptospira* bacteria. It has a major global burden with high morbidity and mortality rates. Leptospirosis is a prevalent disease in Sri Lanka with recurrent seasonal outbreaks. The disease is primarily caused by occupational exposure. Prevention relies on good knowledge, positive attitudes towards prevention, and responsible practices.

Methods: This study was a descriptive cross-sectional study, conducted among adult paddy-cultivating farmers in Bulathsinhala MOH area in the Kaluthara district. The study was conducted from February 2023 to October 2023, with a sample size of 463 farmers. The sample was chosen from the cluster sampling method. Data were collected through an interviewer-administered questionnaire in which sociodemographic characteristics, knowledge, attitude, and practices related to leptospirosis prevention were assessed. Frequency distributions, mean, median and mode were used to describe the data. Chi-square test was done to determine the associations at $p < 0.05$ significance level.

Results: The study achieved 100% response rate with participants having a mean age of 54.49 years. Overall knowledge of participants was unsatisfactory (mean = 16.21, median = 16.00, mode = 15, SD = 2.99). The participants' overall attitude was satisfactory (mean = 21.91, median = 23.00, mode = 27, SD = 4.91). Furthermore, the overall practice was also satisfactory (mean = 5.06, median = 5.00, mode = 6.00, SD = 2.22). There was a statistically significant association between the level of knowledge and level of practice ($p < 0.05$) as well as between the level of attitudes and the level of practices ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study found a statistically significant association between knowledge, attitude, and practices, suggesting good knowledge and positive attitudes can encourage farmers to practice preventive measures to prevent leptospirosis.

Keywords: leptospirosis, knowledge, attitude, practice, prevention