

Knowledge and practices regarding sugar and salt consumption among government servants in a selected Divisional Secretary office

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Unhealthy diet is one of the major risk factors of non-communicable diseases. This study was done to describe knowledge and practices regarding sugar and salt consumption in their diet among government servants in Ambalangoda Divisional Secretary (DS) office (Southern Province, Sri Lanka). Descriptive cross sectional study was done by administering a pre-tested structured self-administered questionnaire, which was prepared after a literature search and obtaining opinion of an expert panel. All the staff in Ambalangoda DS office were invited, and a total of 78 subjects were participated (response rate 84.8%). The majority was males (64.1%) and the mean age was 43.2 ± 7.7 (SD) years. Majority were taking rice on an average day as breakfast (89.7%), followed by bread (7.8%). About half of the subjects reported adding salt when cooking rice in their homes (51.3%) and 10.2% reported consuming more than 6 tea-spoons of sugar per day with tea. About 94.0% reported consuming carbonated drinks once a week and 69.2% reported consuming ice creams at least once a week. Almost all were aware that cakes, carbonated drinks and sweetened milk packets have added sugar. 54.6% didn't know having tea with sugar is a major source of receiving excess sugar in the body. Those who had university degree were more likely than others, not to add salt when cooking rice ($p < 0.01$) and to consume less sugar ($p < 0.01$). Health promotion programs are warranted to correct these unhealthy dietary habits.

Keywords: Dietary habits, non-communicable diseases

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