

Outcome and acceptability of an educational intervention programme on food-borne diseases and food safety behaviour for food handlers and related sectors in Sri Lanka

Wickramatilake C. M.¹, Wijesinghe C. J.², Wijayaratne W. M. D. G. B.³, Tillekeratne V.⁴, Dolamullage J. M.⁵

¹ *Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna*

² *Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna*

³ *Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna*

⁴ *Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka*

⁵ *Medical Officer of Health Office, Bope-Poddala*

Summary

This study evaluated the effectiveness of an educational intervention carried out to improve the awareness of food-borne diseases (FBDs) and food safety behaviour among selected target groups in Southern Sri Lanka and found out the perceptions of the participants on the usefulness of the programme. The intervention was an interactive teaching-learning programme for 60 participants. Their awareness on FBDs and food safety was evaluated before and after the intervention using a 25-item questionnaire. The feedback on the programme was obtained in an unstructured format. Pre- and post-intervention scores for the questionnaire were compared in 49 participants who completed both, using paired t-test. Mean score of knowledge had significantly increased after the intervention {17.6(SD±3.3) Vs. 20.9(SD±1.6); p=0.001}. Participants indicated the importance of continuation of the programme and expanding the coverage. Intervention was effective in improving the overall awareness on FBDs and food safety and acceptability of the intervention was satisfactory.

Keywords: food-borne diseases, food safety behaviour, educational intervention, perception, Sri Lanka