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PP 53

Assessment of the Knowledge on Daily Water Requirement and Dehydration among the Pregnant Women in Selected MOH Areas in Galle District

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Background: Water is the most essential component for all living organisms to survive. Pregnant women are at a high risk of dehydration, and they are reported to have inadequate fluid intakes. Pregnancy increases women's weight and energy intake due to their special physical status. This causes a proportional increase in water intake.

Objective: To assess the knowledge on the daily water requirement and dehydration among the pregnant women in selected Medical Officer of Health (MOH) areas in Galle district

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted on a conveniently selected sample of 366 pregnant women recruited from Galle, Bope-poddala, and Akmeemana MOH areas (n=122 from each MOH area). A pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge about daily water requirements and dehydration. Marks were given to each question in the questionnaire, and knowledge scores were categorized according to the given marks (>90% - excellent knowledge, 90-75% - good, 75-50 - average, and <50% - poor). Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 25.0.

Results: Majority of the participants, (n=193, 52.7%), were in the 18-30 years age range. Majority were Sinhalese (n=327, 89.3%) and Buddhist (n=316, 86.3%). About 56% of the pregnant women were from rural areas. Of the 366 participants, 39.9% have been educated up to GCE Advanced Level. However, all the participants (n=366, 100%) had a poor knowledge on daily water requirement. The mean(±SD) knowledge score was 15.57(5.14) for the knowledge on daily water requirement. All of them (100%) had a poor knowledge regarding dehydration as well. The mean(±SD) knowledge score was 16.87(±5.57) for the knowledge on dehydration. The total knowledge score of the pregnant mothers were significantly different with respect to their residence, educational level, and monthly income (p=0.001, p<0.001 and p<0.001, respectively).

Conclusions: Knowledge on daily water requirement, and dehydration among pregnant mothers is poor. Findings emphasize the urgent requirement of improving the knowledge of pregnant women on daily water requirement, proper hydration, and the consequences of dehydration.

Keywords: *Dehydration, Daily fluid intake, Knowledge, Pregnant women, Water requirement*