

Technical Session (Oral) A3: Social Studies I



Current Trends Related to Filariasis in the Matara District

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Abstract

Filariasis is a disease caused by a parasite. It is estimated that around 120 million cases are reported around the world every year. Geographically the disease spreads in tropical and sub tropical areas such as Asia, Africa and Latin America. Filariasis disease is one of the major health issues in these countries. Even though, Sri Lanka has recorded relatively low occurrence, some areas have been identified with the disease at recent times. This study is confined to the Weligama Divisional Secretariat in the Matara District. The main objective of this research was to identify the current trends in Filariasis in the District. The data were collected using primary and secondary methods. Primary data were collected through participatory observation and household interviews using semi-structured schedules. The stratified sampling techniques were used to select 32 infected and 24 uninfected household in the areas two Grama Niladari divisions namely Midigama South and Aluthweediya. Uninfected households were chosen randomly. The evidence suggest that, increasing pattern of Filariasis can be seen in the Matara District during 2005-2007 and during the period 2008-2010 gradually declined. The study revealed that the authorities have not eradicated the disease successfully as new cases have been reported from area. This study also revealed that the reappearance of the disease is due to the poverty, poor awareness of the disease among the general public, lack of health infrastructure facilities and the attitudes of the people. Many people who settle down in this town either do not have a sufficient income or are unemployed. Both natural and human environmental factors can be identified as the cause of the disease. A properly designed long term anti-filaria programme has to be introduced.

Keywords : *awareness, Filariasis, human attitude, trends, environment*