

Determinants of Drinking Water Sources among Farmer Community in Anuradhapura District: Evidence from *Kekirawa* DS Division

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Abstract

Chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology (CKDu) is a tragedy in North Central Province especially among farmer community. Since there was a belief that drinking water in affected areas is the main reason for the disease, reverse osmosis (RO) plants were established to purify water and reduce the exposure to possible nephrotoxins through drinking water. Moreover, many campaigns were organized by the government and other parties, to inform people on the importance of consuming purified water either by avoiding contaminated well water or by using purification methods. Even though there have been many efforts taken to increase the consumption of purified water, not 100% of the farmers were doing as same. The overall objective of this study was to find out farmers' usage of purified water for both drinking and cooking purposes. The specific objective of the study was to examine the factors affecting on farmers drinking water choices. The theoretical approach to the study is expected utility theory which explains the nature of decision making under the risk. The analysis of factors affecting for water choice was performed using Logistic Regression (logit) method. 48 farmers were randomly selected from Kekirawa DS Division in Anuradhapura district. The results indicated that only 40% of the farm families were consuming RO purified water. Majority of them were consuming purified water only for drinking purposes. Those who were consuming RO purified water were having kids in their home, having some knowledge on CKDu, educated or willing to pay for purified water. According to the study more than 60% of the respondents believed that chemicals used for agricultural activities are leached to ground water sources and that is affecting on kidney diseases. This study concludes that, not all the farmers in Kekirawa DS Division are consuming RO purified water yet. Even though RO purified water is available in CKDu affected areas, not all the people can afford it since they have to pay for it or do not know the importance of consuming it.

Keywords: CKDu, Contamination, Drinking water, Purification, Reverse Osmosis

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