

**OP 04****Perception and Awareness on the Practices of Obtaining an Informed Consent Prior to Medical Intervention among Hospitalized Patients in Puttalam District, Sri Lanka**

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**Background:** Informed consent is providing information to improve the patient's autonomy in making healthcare-related decisions. Adequate information must be provided on the diagnosis, the proposed treatment, benefits and risks, alternative treatment and any consequences of declining treatment. Healthcare workers may ignore this as a result of busy schedules which would eventually affect the quality of life of the patient.

**Objectives:** To identify patient's perception and awareness on the practice of informed consent prior to a medical intervention.

**Methods:** A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted on a convenient sample of 141 patients admitted to hospitals in Puttalam district. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS software.

**Results:** Mean age of participants was 34 years. About 46.8% stated that consent was obtained only for some procedures. Most patients (89.4%) knew that the informed consent is important before initiating a medical procedure. Many knew that obtaining consent is a legal requirement (85.1%). Also, 68.1% agreed that a procedure cannot be conducted without the voluntary consent of the patient. Nevertheless, only 40.4% of the respondents completely understood the explanations. The explanation rarely included an explanation of the alternative procedures, any lifestyle changes after the procedure and consequences of not performing the procedure, as stated by 36.2%. A majority (66.0%) agreed that their family could give consent on their behalf. In contrast, 46.8% of the respondents disagreed that consent from their family alone is sufficient. Written consent is better than verbal consent, as stated by 85.0% of the participants. However, the majority of 59.6% stated that they were satisfied with the informed consent process.

**Conclusions:** The patients had sufficient knowledge and satisfactory perceptions about informed consent. However, healthcare providers must ensure that the process of obtaining informed consent is complete.

**Keywords:** *Informed consent, Medical intervention, Perceptions, Knowledge, Patients*