

PP 15 - Knowledge on the Management of Upper Respiratory Tract Infections: A Comparison between Health and Non-Health Science Undergraduates in University of Ruhuna

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Background: Prevalence of upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) is high among university undergraduates due to easy spreadability which drives them for self-medication.

Objectives: To compare the knowledge between health science (HS) and non-health science (NHS) undergraduates on the management of URTIs.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted in four NHS faculties and Faculty of Allied Health Sciences in University of Ruhuna. Data were collected from 400 NHS and 100 HS students who were studying in 3rd and 4th years, using a self-administered questionnaire. Recent history of URTIs and Knowledge related to antibiotics, URTIs, spreadability of URTIs and antibiotic resistance were assessed. Score of 1 was given for each correct response while 0 was given for wrong and uncertain responses (Range:0-14).

Results and conclusions: Majority of NHS students were aged 23 (34.2%), males (51.3%) while majority of HS students were aged 24 (34%), females (79%). Most of NHS students (30%) had URTIs twice during last 6 months period, but it was more than four times in HS students (28%). Common cold was the most common symptom among both groups during last episode of URTIs (~70%). 32% of the NHS students usually take antibiotics without a prescription when they develop URTIs and it was 28% in HS students. The median total knowledge score was 6 in NHS students while it was 11 in HS students. There were significant differences in knowledge with gender ($p=0.003$), faculty of participant ($p<0.001$), profession of the participants' parent ($p=0.005$) among NHS students and academic year ($p=0.013$) and monthly family income ($p=0.019$) among HS students. HS students had moderate knowledge on management of URTIs and the knowledge of NHS student was poor. Nearly 30% of HS and NHS undergraduates have taken antibiotics without prescriptions. Both HS and NHS undergraduates should be educated about the danger of antibiotic self-medication.

Keywords: Health science, knowledge, non-health science, URTIs