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**A Study on the Level of General Health Education and the Barriers to Health Literacy among the Public in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka**

Perera J.A.S.M.B.<sup>#</sup>, Weerakoon N.

*School of Nursing, International Institute of Health Sciences, Sri Lanka*

*<sup>#</sup>Corresponding author: sandaneymperera@gmail.com*

**Background:** Health determines the quality of life. Health education is the degree to which people have the capacity to obtain, process and understand health information needed to make healthy choices. The ability to understand the changes in health conditions, to avoid complications and to get rid of diseases is known as health literacy. People suffer from various diseases and health complications as they are deprived of proper health education and health literacy.

**Objectives:** To assess individual perception on barriers of health literacy and to find reliable methods of enhancing health education

**Methods:** A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted using convenient public sample. The data were collected through a self developed pre-tested questionnaire and analysed statistically using SPSS version 25.

**Results:** The total number of responses was 272. The majority (88%) were, at least qualified with Advanced Level and 84% of the study sample was below 30 years. About 88% was confident and satisfied with their level of health information. From the participants, 92% agreed that health education is important for a happy and healthy life. About 65% believed that their level of health education is sufficient for self-diagnosis. Majority (70%) stated that they can avoid risks that would result in any conditions or complications. About 74% indicated that the level of education, unavailability of reliable sources and socio-economic conditions are the main barriers to health literacy. The best modes of communicating health information, as per them, are internet, healthcare awareness programmes and television as responded by 37%, 22% and 22% respectively. About 41% stated that healthcare providers do not educate people enough on their illnesses.

**Conclusions:** People need more knowledge on health education. Barriers to health literacy can be avoided and health education can be developed, if the right methods are implemented. Health providers should take initiative to enhance healthy lifestyles.

**Keywords:** *Awareness, Barriers, Healthcare, Health education, Health literacy*