

## **Awareness of Home-Based Management of Childhood Diarrhoea among Mothers of Children under Five Years old in Kurunegala District, Sri Lanka**

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**Background:** Worldwide, about 480,000 children die annually from diarrhoea despite availability of simple effective treatment. According to UNICEF and WHO diarrhoea can be controlled by home-based management with Oral Rehydration Therapy. Therefore, it is important to determine the awareness of the mothers regarding home-based management of diarrhoea.

**Objectives:** To determine the awareness of mothers who have children under five years about diarrheal diseases, symptoms, symptoms of dehydration and awareness about the practices of home based management of childhood diarrhoea

**Methods:** A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted with 130 mothers who have children under 5 years of age in Kurunegala district using a self-administered questionnaire which was available in both Sinhala and English languages. Convenient sampling technique was used as the sampling method. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 22.

**Results:** Almost all the participants had heard about diarrhoea (98.4%) and 93% of respondents had the idea that diarrhoea is passing watery stools while 72.1% had responded for abdominal pain and 26.4% for fever. Dehydration is considered as the most severe stage of diarrhoea, 74.6% had selected dry mouth as a symptom of dehydration while 40.5% and 23% had selected cracked lips and urinating less frequently respectively. Only 6.3% and 1.6% had chosen more salivation and hyperactivity respectively. The aspects to analyse the understanding of the practices related to home-based management of childhood diarrhoea revealed that only 56% had selected the response to administer oral rehydration solution (ORS) always. About the fact that a prepared ORS can be used for only 24 hours, 69.8% had selected the correct answer.

**Conclusions:** Mothers need more knowledge and awareness about the symptoms of diarrhoea and dehydration as well as practices of management and proper handling of ORS.

**Keywords:** *Awareness, Dehydration, Diarrhea, Management, Oral Replacement Solution*