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## **Knowledge and Attitude Towards Pre-Marital Counselling among Newly Married Couples**

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Background Preparation for marriage has become a popular intervention for many individuals planning to marry. One of the basic components of premarital counseling is family life education; it provides the couples with knowledge about individuals as sexual beings, as well as addressing family roles and responsibilities, parenting, human development and interpersonal relations. Due to its importance, around the world many countries have encouraged premarital counseling as an important part of primary Health Care Services. In this Background, the main objective of this research was to explore the knowledge and attitudes of the newly married couples towards premarital counseling. Based on purposive sampling, the field study was conducted in this regard in five (05) Grama Niladhari Divisions in Hambantota district. In-depth interviews were conducted for primary data collection. The study revealed that more than 70% of newly married couples have marital problems such as sharing household responsibilities, overcoming economic problems, job insecurity, irritating habits, relationship problems, sexual problems and personality problems. But it was only 20% of couples who believed that these problems are directly affected for their marital satisfaction. However, 35% of couples had the knowledge regarding pre-marital counseling gained from their formal education (especially in university education) and from informal ways like peer education. In addition, it was revealed that the myths and beliefs regarding pre-marital counseling are nurtured by culture. When comparing gender differences of the attitudes towards pre-marital counseling, the study revealed that married women have negative attitudes about pre-marital counseling than male. About 54% of the sample preferred to seek advice and experiences from their married friends to manage the problems they face in married life and 20% couples strongly believed that marital issues should not be referred to a third party for any reason. As a result of lack of systematic and formal knowledge towards pre-marital counseling services, newly married couples have become a vulnerable group. Hence, it can be concluded that the family counselor can be an educator, guider, advocator, trainer and motivator for enhancing their marital satisfaction. In this background pre-marital counseling has become a predominant need for marriage.

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