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**Knowledge and Attitudes regarding Oral Cancer and Self-examination of the Mouth and Risk Assessment for Oral Cancer in Individuals above 30 years of Age in Divisional Secretariat Kesbewa**

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**Background:** Oral cancer has been emerged as a significant global public health concern. Compared to other South Asian countries the incidence of oral cancers in Sri Lanka is high. In Sri Lanka out of all cancers registered, 12.4% were reported to be oral cancers. It has the highest rate of mortality among cancers while oral cancers are found to be the leading cancers among males in Sri Lanka.

**Objectives:** To assess the knowledge and attitude regarding oral cancer and self-examination of the individuals above 30 years of age in Divisional Secretariat Kesbewa (DSK).

**Methodology:** This was a community based, descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among 170 individuals above 30 years age of both genders in DSK Colombo district, Sri Lanka. Data were collected using a content validated, a pre-tested interviewer- administered questionnaire. Written consent was obtained from each participant prior to the study while assuring their voluntary participation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and SPSS 23.

**Results:** The response rate was 96.47%. The majority of participants were males (60.4%, n=99) and were between 30-54 age category (67.1%, n=110). Overall knowledge of the participants were poor (37.8%, n=62). There was a significant association between participants overall knowledge and their age ( $p=0.022$ ). Overall attitude of the participants were positive regarding oral cancer and self-examination (66.5%, n=109). There was a significant association between participants attitude and gender ( $p=0.022$ ). Further, a significant positive correlation between participants knowledge and attitude on oral cancer and mouth self-examination (Pearson correlation 0.472,  $p=0.000$ ) was observed.

**Conclusions:** Participants knowledge on oral cancer and self-examination of the mouth was poor while their attitude was positive since there was a positive relationship between knowledge and the attitude, it shows the requirement of proper health education and health promotion interventions to improve participants' awareness and attitude regarding oral cancer and mouth self-examination.

**Keywords:** Oral cancer, Mouth, Self-examination, Individuals, Attitude, Knowledge