

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Regarding Blood Donation Among Residents of Matara MOH Area

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Introduction - Blood donation is a practice which saves the lives of thousands. Research on blood donation in Sri Lanka have primarily focused mostly on blood donors. This study assessed the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding blood donation and associated factors among the residents of Matara MOH area.

Materials and Methods - A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 120 residents in Matara MOH area selected by multistage random sampling. Data on levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to blood donation, as well as sociodemographic factors and information sources were collected using a validated interviewer-administered questionnaire. Participants were categorized on knowledge (good/poor) and attitude (good/poor) based on scoring systems. Statistical analysis using SPSS included frequencies and proportions for categorical variables, and chi-square tests to assess associations. Significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results - The population was comprised of 43% males, while most represented the age group of 40-49 years ($n=112$). 52.5% of the participants had good knowledge regarding blood donation. Only 16.5% ($n=20$) and 23.1% ($n=28$) were aware that individuals with well-controlled diabetes and individuals with controlled hypertension can donate blood, while only 26% ($n=26$) knew the maximum eligible age for donation. A large majority (96.7%) showed positive attitudes, yet only 30% ($n=36$) had donated blood earlier. Among donors, altruism (63.4%) and self-interest (63.4%) were the main motivations. Non-donors most commonly cited being not fit (28.6%), lack of time (22.6%), and insufficient opportunities (34.5%) as barriers. No significant associations were found between sociodemographic factors and levels of knowledge or attitudes ($p > 0.05$), and knowledge wasn't associated with attitude levels ($p=0.263$).

Discussion - Major gaps in knowledge regarding blood donation were found in specific areas, which indicate the need for targeted educational interventions. Increasing opportunities for donation and improving awareness through media are important to increase the blood donation rates.

Keywords - Blood donation, knowledge, attitudes, practices.