Subtheme 2: Empowering communities for health and wellness   Abstract 15

Knowledge and perceptions on gender-based violence and their associated factors among patients admitted to Teaching Hospital, Jaffna

Sivapiriya S[1], Nirosha S[1], Pathum Sasanka MA[1], Ravindu Dissanayake DMT[1], Shivarathan V[1], Rajeev G[2], Pranavan S[3]

[1]Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna
[2]Department of Community and Family Medicine, University of Jaffna
[3]Teaching Hospital Jaffna

Background and objective: Gender-based violence (GBV) is a prevalent issue in Sri Lanka with severe but often hidden consequences. Jaffna is a notable hotspot for domestic violence, indicating the prevalence of GBV in the region. Our study primarily addressed this concern, recognizing that DV and GBV are closely linked. GBV-related health problems range from mild depression to fatal outcomes, underscoring the urgency of addressing this issue. The objective of this study was to assess the knowledge, perceptions on gender-based violence and associated factors among patients admitted to Teaching Hospital Jaffna (THJ).

Methods: This institutional-based analytical cross-sectional study was conducted from November 2022 to February 2023 at THJ. We used the Kobo-collect app for interviewer-administered questionnaires on GBV-associated factors, knowledge, and perceptions. Data were analyzed with SPSS Software.

Results: In total, 394 patients participated in the study (7.72% non-response); 53.8% were male and 33% were below 30 years. Notably, 20.3% had experienced GBV, among them 41.3% had acted against GBV. Knowledge assessment revealed 45.2% poor, 21.3% average, and 33.5% good knowledge scores, while perceptions were 45.2% positive, 11.7% neutral, and 43.1% negative. Significant associations were found, linking higher GBV incidence to age over 30 (X^2=5.001, p=0.025), educational qualification below O/L (X^2=3.965, p=0.046), unmarried status (X^2=11.644, p=0.001), good knowledge (X^2=12.67, p=0.002), and negative perceptions (X^2=7.043, p=0.030). Hence the study revealed significant associations between GBV and age, civil status, educational qualifications, knowledge and perceptions on GBV.

Conclusion and recommendations: This study highlights low GBV knowledge, emphasizing the need for interventions. Perceptions play a key role in GBV experiences. Initiatives should start in childhood, focusing on education. Addressing marital conflicts, enforcing robust laws, offering counseling, and promoting a healthier lifestyle can significantly reduce GBV in society.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, Knowledge, Perceptions, Associated factors.