

Knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to blood donation in a selected population in Jaffna

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Introduction and Objectives: Blood transfusion is a lifesaving clinical procedure. The only source of blood products used in blood transfusion procedures are human donors; a substitute is yet to be discovered. Poor knowledge and negative attitudes regarding blood donation have resulted in insufficient availability of blood and blood products for transfusion procedures in many settings. This study aimed to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices related to blood donation and their associated socio-demographic factors in Jaffna.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among service-users visiting the Motor Traffic Department, District Secretariat, Jaffna, between 12 noon and 4 pm for six weeks. The required sample size was 377. Consecutive sampling was used to recruit 300 consented adults lesser than 60 years. Data was collected with an interviewer-based questionnaire developed by the investigators. Data collection ended prematurely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Frequencies, proportions, and the Chi-Square test were used to analyze the data with SPSS (v25). The critical level was set at 0.05. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna.

Results: A total of 300 service users participated; of them, most were females (59%), between 18 to 39 years (77%), with at least O/L qualifications (90%). Knowledge on basic eligibility criteria for blood donation was lower compared to knowledge on risk behaviors that rendered them ineligible. Although an overwhelming majority (96%) believed that people should donate blood, only 21% had donated even once in their lifetime. The most common reason cited by participants for not having donated blood was that they had not been approached for blood donation (42%). Male gender ($p < 0.001$) and being employed ($p = 0.013$) were significantly associated with having donated blood.

Conclusions: Knowledge gaps exist even among a fairly educated population in Jaffna. Attitudes on blood donation seem favorable, although practices are poor. Blood donation campaigns should address identified knowledge gaps and actively recruit the public for blood donation.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Blood donation, Jaffna