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Skin Disease Prevention Practices Among Sanitary Workers in Jaffna Municipality

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Introduction & Objectives: Sanitary workers are frequently exposed to occupational hazards, including biological waste, chemicals, and prolonged outdoor work, which predispose them to a range of skin diseases. Despite this, practices for preventing skin diseases among sanitary workers remain poorly studied in the Sri Lankan context, particularly in Jaffna Municipality. This study aimed to assess the level of preventive practices regarding skin diseases and its associated factors among sanitary workers in Jaffna Municipality.

Materials & Methods: An institution-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among sanitary workers in Jaffna Municipality. As the calculated sample size (384) exceeded the total study population (250), the entire population was included. Data were collected using a pretested, interviewer-administered questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 27. The questionnaire was developed in English, validated by an expert panel, translated into Tamil using back-translation. Practice was categorized as good (above 65%) or poor (65% or below), and its association with sociodemographic and work-related factors was assessed using the chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Results: Of the 250 eligible participants, 234 responded (93.6% response rate). Only 35.5% demonstrated good preventive practice, while 64.5% showed poor practice. Practice level was significantly associated with a prior history of skin disease, attendance at training, access to water and soap, availability of bathing/changing facilities, PPE adequacy, frequency of supervisor reminders, and years of service (all $p < 0.05$), while sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, and marital status showed no significant association.

Conclusions: Preventive practice regarding skin diseases among sanitary workers in Jaffna Municipality remains inadequate. Good practice was associated with workplace infrastructure, adequate PPE, and supervisor support. Regular training, improved PPE supply, and better workplace facilities are recommended to strengthen skin disease prevention among sanitary workers.

Keywords: Practice, Skin diseases, Sanitary workers, Prevention, Jaffna