

Knowledge on prebiotics and probiotics and associated factors among state pharmacists in the Northern Province

M.H.F. Nasrifa¹, P. Kalki², R. Surenthirakumaran³, M.G. Sathiadas^{4,5}

¹*Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Jaffna*

²*Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Jaffna*

³*Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

⁴*Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

⁵*Teaching Hospital Jaffna*

Background and objective: Probiotics and prebiotics are presently recommended for various diseases. Prebiotics are non-viable food components and probiotics are live microorganisms. As these products are newly introduced into the pharmaceutical world, pharmacists could serve as important sources of information and advice for patients. This study was designed to assess the knowledge of pre- and probiotics and the influence of sociodemographic and work-related factors among state pharmacists in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among all state pharmacists (N=114) in the Northern Province by using a self-administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed with SPSS and bivariate analysis was done by using the chi-square test and Fisher's exact test.

Results: The response rate was 92.9%. Two-thirds (66%, n=70) of participants were females with a mean age of 34.7 (± 7.9) years. Less than a quarter (23.6%, n=25) were degree holders, and the majority (73.6%, n=78) had <10 years of experiences. Among the participants, 51.9% and 53.8% had adequate knowledge on prebiotics and probiotics, respectively. Among factors associated with knowledge on prebiotics, being an in-charge pharmacist ($p=0.025$) and participating in a seminar ($p=0.021$) were statistically significantly associated with knowledge on prebiotics. Participating in a seminar ($p=0.003$) was statistically significantly associated with knowledge on probiotics.

Conclusion: Approximately half of the state pharmacists in the Northern Province have inadequate knowledge on pre- and probiotics. Conducting in-service educational programmes may improve the knowledge on pre- and probiotics among state pharmacists.

Keywords: Knowledge, Probiotics, Prebiotics, State Pharmacists