

**Knowledge, attitude and practice in relation to worm control and associated factors among mothers of children admitted to pediatric wards, Teaching Hospital Jaffna: A mixed method study**

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**Background and objective:** Intestinal parasite infestation is a prevalent health issue, particularly affecting impoverished communities and children worldwide. Maternal knowledge plays a crucial role in preventing worm infestations and promoting long term health among their children. The objective of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitude, and practice, in relation to worm control and associated factors among mothers of children admitted to the pediatric wards of Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

**Methods:** This mixed-method study was carried out in the paediatric wards of Teaching Hospital Jaffna by recruiting 427 mothers of children between the ages of 2 to 13 years from November 2022 to February 2023. Data were collected with an interviewer-administered questionnaire for the quantitative component and a focus group interview guide for the qualitative component. The quantitative data were analyzed with SPSS.

**Results:** Of 427 mothers, 71.9% (n=307) were housewives and 28.1% (n=120) working mothers. Mean knowledge and practice scores of mothers were 69.81% (SD 13.3) and 76.85% (SD 10.53), respectively. Knowledge score was positively correlated with age ( $r = 0.162$ ,  $n=427$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) and monthly income of the family ( $r=0.131$ ,  $n=427$ ,  $p=0.007$ ). Practice score was negatively correlated with age of the first child ( $r = -0.12$ ,  $n=427$ ,  $p=0.013$ ). In the focus group discussions, mothers had good knowledge regarding worm infestation and preventive measures. However, most of them did not adhere to the preventive measures routinely.

**Conclusion and recommendations:** Although most mothers who participated in our study had good knowledge and practice regarding worm infestation, their awareness regarding deworming and the health consequences of worm infestations were poor. Poor socioeconomic status and younger age may have led to poor knowledge regarding worm infestations among some mothers. Prioritizing the mothers from a low socioeconomic background when organizing awareness programmes and conducting good counselling programmes may improve their health seeking behavior.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Enterobiasis, Worm infestation