

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE AMONG PREGNANT MOTHERS REGARDING USAGE OF IODIZED SALT IN JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

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Iodine deficiency is one of the most common deficiencies in the world, with almost one billion people affected. Causes of iodine deficiency are related to the intake of iodine deficient diets even though iodized table salt is available. Objective of this study was to assess the methods of using iodized salt among pregnant mothers of Jaffna District in Sri Lanka. In this study, systematic sampling technique was used and 477 pregnant mothers were selected at third trimester of gestation and interviewer administered questionnaire used as the study instrument. The mean age of pregnant mothers was 28.9 (± 5.5) years and ranged from 17.0 to 44.0 years. Among the mothers 17.5% lacked knowledge on iodized salt. In our study population of mothers who had no formal education, grade 1-5, grades 6-11, Grade 12-13 and degree & above were 0.2 (n1), 9.6 (n46), 58.9 (n281), 23.9 (n114) and 7.3% (n35), respectively. Of the total number of mothers, 82.5% (n394) used iodized salt, 2.5% (n12) iodized & normal salt while 15.0% (n72) were unaware of availability of iodized salt. Majority of mothers 85.0% (n405) were using the iodized salt, indicating the availability of iodized salt in the market. Most of the mothers 85.9% (n410) add salt directly and nearly half 49.2% (n235) of them added it after cooking. 21% (n100) of mothers dissolved salt and 10.5% (n50) of mothers wash salt for cooking purpose. Nearly same numbers of mothers who had no formal education, grade 1-5, grades 6-11, Grade 12-13 and degree & above used iodized salt directly before and after cooking and were as follows 1 & 1, 14 & 15, 122 & 118, 52 & 52, and 15 & 16, respectively. Only a few (n3) mothers added the salt during cooking by different methods such as dissolving, washing and adding directly. A minority (n20) of mothers always washed salt with water before addition. These results show that majority of the mothers are not knowledgeable on loss of iodine by washing and heating. Based on this study we conclude that pregnant mothers in the Jaffna district lack knowledge on the correct method of usage of the iodized salt. Thus, it is important to educate the mothers on use of iodized salt.

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