

## Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Towards Malaria: a Comparative Study Among Public in High-risk and Low-risk Areas in Jaffna District

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Mosquito-borne diseases, including malaria, are of major public health importance in the Jaffna District. The knowledge, attitude and practice of the public toward malaria were investigated using a structured-questionnaire in two high-risk (Kudaththanai and Tholpuram-west) and one low-risk (Pannakam) localities in the District. The questionnaire was administered to heads of 157 households (106 high-risk and 51 low-risk) representing 10% of the total households. On average, 54% of the households in high-risk localities had previous history of malaria. Eighty-nine percent of the households in high-risk localities had only primary education when compared with 59% in low-risk area. Even though respondents from both areas stated that mosquito nuisance was moderate and biting activity confined mainly to dawn and dusk, their knowledge on malaria parasite, vector, vector breeding sources and positive attitude toward vector control measures were 9%, 95%, 91% and 91% ; 14%, 96%, 74% and 74% in high-risk and low-risk area respectively. Almost all households practiced one or more personal protective measures in both areas with high percent (59%) usage of mosquito nets by households in high-risk areas. A significant difference ( $P < 0.05$ ) was observed in the knowledge on clinical signs among households in high-risk and low-risk areas where 95% in high-risk area were aware of clinical signs while 59% in low-risk areas. A significant difference ( $P < 0.05$ ) in the treatment seeking behavior for suspected malaria and course of treatment for malaria was observed among households living in high-risk and low-risk area. The study indicates the importance of an awareness program as an integral part of a control campaign in a disease endemic area.