



## ***PEOPLES' VIEWS ABOUT A MULTIDISCIPLINARY MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME AIMED AT PROMOTING POPULATION HEALTH***

S.S.W. Fernando, T.K. Athukorala, N.P. Jayasekara, T Hemajith, T Ponnampuruma

Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Galle, Sri Lanka

*srimalief@gmail.com*

A community-based multidisciplinary medical education programme called Community Attachment Programme (CAP) has been a part of the medical curriculum in a university in Southern Sri Lanka since early 90s. This programme, which runs over a period of 2 years, trains the undergraduates to identify determinants of health, make community diagnosis and manage health problems in the community context by multidisciplinary teamwork. A study was done to evaluate the effectiveness of CAP in making people aware of the multidimensional nature of health.

A cross sectional survey was conducted among 151 conveniently selected individuals in the community, from a total of 300 who participated in the CAP in 2014, using a self-administered questionnaire.

The sample consisted of Muslims (66%) and Sinhalese. Mean family size was 5.32 ( $SD \pm 1.97$ ) and majority of the respondents belonged to middle income group. On average, undergraduates made 5 visits per household. About 94% of the participants were on the opinion that the multidisciplinary nature of the CAP assisted to enhance their health, by empowering them to take correct decisions on health issues in individuals and their environment. About 65% of those individuals who participated in health promotion activities in the community with multi-stakeholders, expressed their willingness to continue such community development work even after the conclusion of CAP. We noted that respondents from the low income category had the highest mean satisfaction score compared to those in the middle and upper income categories (ANOVA;  $F(2,112)=7.59912, p<.01$ ). Number of visits by undergraduates was positively correlated with satisfaction score ( $r=0.2, p<.05$ ). However, about half of the respondents reported that social and behavioral health issues of their families were not adequately addressed by the programme.

The CAP has been perceived as a productive population health programme by the participants, and the low income group seems to have benefited the most from the programme. Undergraduates' knowledge, attitudes and skills in addressing social and behavioral health issues in the community were not satisfactory. CAP should be improved

to address all factors impacting on health with equal importance, in order to implement community-oriented sustainable programmes to promote population health.

**Keywords:** *Community Attachment Programme, Population health, Community, Undergraduates*