



THE EFFECTS OF THALASSAEMIA AS A LONG TERM DISEASE CONDITION TO SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Thalassaemia is a chronic, genetically inherited, autosomal recessive blood disease. Thalassaemia patients suffer from serious illnesses with severe anaemia and need blood transfusions and iron chelation throughout their life time. This disease and its treatment process severely affect the education of school going patients. Estimated number of Thalassaemia homozygote patients in Sri Lanka is 2000. Almost 62-100 children are born with thalassaemia annually in Sri Lanka which cause a serious social problem in affected areas. The main objectives of this study are to analysis the short term and long term effects of thalassaemia disease to educational process of thalassaemia affecters, identify their requirements for better educational process to manage this long term disease. This research was conducted in National Thalassaemia Centre in Kurunegala, This was a community based cross sectional study. The major data collection tools were structured interviews, observation method and secondary literature sources. Sample size is 100. Students with thalassaemia are able to attend school only 10 to 15 days averaging 12 school days per month. Patients going to hospital for blood transfusion and the other side effects arising are the major reasons for high absenteeism.. Unable to participate in extracurricular activities, sports, and low results are the other major problems caused by the disease. The above mentioned education barriers, directly affected their examination results making them unable to pursue higher education and professional goals. These students strongly expect greater psychological motivation and to be treated as normal students. Arrangement of blood transfusion facilities during the weekdays and introducing detailed information about Thalassaemia disease to school syllabus, increase the awareness and encourage the people to do the thalassaemia screening test and treat to the affecters correctly and equally will make a better life style for these patients.

Keywords: Thalassaemia, Education, Absenteeism, Problems, Changes