



---

## **KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THAMBUTTEGAMA EDUCATIONAL DIVISION ON SUITABLE FIRST AID NEEDED AT A TRAUMATIC EVENT TO PREVENT SPINAL CORD COMPLICATIONS**

Weerakoon W.M.N.P.\* , Gamage M.W.K. and Imendra K.G.

Allied Health Sciences Degree Programme, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

nuwanlkmd@gmail.com

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Injuries to the spinal cord cause life threatening deformities. After a traumatic event, it is vital to take suitable measures to prevent spinal cord complications when handling and transporting the victim. As falls or injuries are common among school children, improvement of the knowledge and correct practices of school teachers is vital for better management of the incidences in order to prevent spinal cord complications in school children. To assess the knowledge, practices and associated factors for knowledge and practices among school teachers in Thambuttegama educational division on suitable first aid needed at a traumatic event to prevent spinal cord complications. This was a descriptive cross sectional study which was undertaken with 200 school teachers at Thambuttegama educational division selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a pretested interviewer administered questionnaire. The questionnaire explored the variables such as demographic characteristics, knowledge and practices on suitable first aid needed at a traumatic event. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS 20 version. Only 39% of the sample had heard the term “spinal injury” and 93% of them had heard the term “first aid” nevertheless only 1% named the three aims of first aids while 4.5% aware about the primary assessment. Mean score for the awareness on identifying a spinal cord injury after a trauma was 13.31(±6.876) out of 30 and score for the awareness of safe transport methods was 11.05(±5.319) out of 20. Mean score for the overall knowledge for the first aids to prevent spinal cord complications were 44.25±16.439 out of 100. Only 39.5% had engaged in providing first aids before. Mean scores for the practices were 29.05±14.548 out of 50. Those who attended to seminars ( $p<0.05$ ), science teachers ( $p<0.05$ ) and teachers less than 2 years of service ( $p<0.05$ ) scored higher marks while teachers who taught in primary classes ( $p<0.05$ ) scored lower marks. Overall knowledge of the teachers was not satisfactory and majority of teachers haven’t had any experience in giving first aids before in Thambuttegama educational division. Those who participated for seminars on first aid, teachers who had experience less than 2 years and those who taught science subjects had higher marks for knowledge and practices. Teachers who taught in primary classes should be educated. First aid trainings should be introduced to improve the knowledge and practices on suitable first aid needed at a traumatic event to prevent spinal cord complications.

**Keywords:** Traumatic Events, Spinal Injury, First Aid, School Teachers