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## KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING DISEASE AMONG PATIENTS WITH TUBERCULOSIS TREATED AT THASSIM CHEST CLINIC GALLE

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### ABSTRACT

Tuberculosis (TB) is considered as a major global communicable disease with high morbidity and mortality. It is estimated that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the global population is infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. According to the World Health Organization, there was 8.6 million people suffering from TB and 1.3 million deaths following TB in 2012. Tuberculosis is continuing to be a major public health problem in Sri Lanka and 9000 new cases of TB are notified every year, of which around 60% are smear positive pulmonary TB cases (NPTCCD, 2011). The study was designed to assess knowledge and attitudes regarding disease and the factors associated with above among patients with Tuberculosis treated at Thassim Chest clinic in Galle. A descriptive cross sectional study was performed by applying a self-administered questionnaire among 165 conveniently selected patients who attended Thassim chest clinic, Galle. Descriptive statistics was used in SPSS 20.0. ANOVA and independent sample t test was applied to detect the factors (gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, income, employment) associated with level of knowledge and attitudes of patients' with TB. 165 of TB patients participated in this study. The majority (85, 51.5%) of the study participants was male patients. The majority of the participants were Sinhalese (140, 84.8%). Others were Tamils (6.7%) and Moors (8.5%). Majority of the participants were aware that TB is an infectious disease (87.9%) caused by a bacterium (23%) and spread through air droplets from an infected person (69.7%). Majority of subjects (147, 89.1%) were aware that cough more than two weeks is the major symptom of TB and 97% (160) of participants knew that TB is a curable disease. Total 111 (67.3%) number of patients knew the total treatment duration and 22.4% were aware that the disease becomes less infectious after two weeks of therapy. Mass media (TV, radio, newspapers) were the major source of information regarding disease. The level of knowledge was significantly associated with educational level ( $p=0.044$ ) and no associations were found with other demographic variables. The majority (69.7%) had positive attitudes. The study showed a significant association between attitudes and age group, the younger patients (less than 45 years) had more positive attitudes than older age groups. ( $p=0.033$ ). Knowledge regarding the symptoms, modes of transmission and awareness regarding treatment duration for tuberculosis among patients were satisfactory. The positive attitudes were observed in the majority and mainly in the younger people. Patients' knowledge regarding causation and the sequelae of treatment interruption were unsatisfactory. These findings indicate the need to strengthen health education and information systems to upgrade the knowledge regarding TB in patients with disease.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Attitudes, Tuberculosis, Patients