

## Awareness and Perspective of School Teachers of the Anuradhapura District towards Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common child psychiatric disorder with a global prevalence of 5.5%. Sufficient knowledge regarding ADHD among teachers is vital to provide the necessary support for children with ADHD. The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge and the attitude of school teachers of the Anuradhapura district, Sri Lanka towards ADHD. A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted with systematic cluster sampling with probability proportionate to size. The sample size was 458 teachers from 21 different schools covering all five educational zones of the Anuradhapura district. Study instruments comprised of the Knowledge of Attention Deficit Disorder Scale (KADD), the Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusion Scale (TAIS) 1 and 2. The KADD knowledge score median was 11 with an interquartile range (IQR) of 8-14. 61.0% of the teachers have misconceptions and 61.9% of teachers lack knowledge about ADHD. The level of knowledge on ADHD correlated with age (Spearman's correlation ( $r_s = 0.031, 0.533$ ), service period ( $r_s = 0.025, 0.599$ ), student contact hours ( $r_s = -0.006, 0.904$ ) and higher educational qualifications ( $r_s = 0.07, 0.163$ ). The median of the TAIS 1 is 46 with an IQR of 36-58 and the median of TAIS 2 is 49 with an IQR of 40-59. According to TAIS 1 and TAIS 2, 68.4% have a positive attitude towards children with ADHD. The knowledge regarding ADHD is poor among the studied population with 60% having misconceptions and 61.9% lacking knowledge about ADHD. However, the attitude regarding children with ADHD is positive. The education system and teacher training programs should focus on improvement of teachers' knowledge regarding children with ADHD.

**Keywords:** Child psychiatric disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, schoolteachers, attitude, knowledge