

## **Abstract**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

Sri Lanka experienced the worst ever outbreak of leptospirosis in 2008. One major determinant of control and prevention of communicable diseases is public awareness on the disease. The purpose of the present study was to determine the awareness on leptospirosis among public Sri Lanka.

### **METHODS:**

A national household survey was carried out as a part of research methodology training of first year medical undergraduates in Rajarata Medical School. Each student visited 10 households surrounding his/her house to complete the interviewer administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on the factsheet published by the Epidemiology Unit for public health.

### **RESULTS:**

Altogether 602 participants from 14 districts participated in the study. Of them 93.7% were aware of rat as a reservoir animal, but only 3% were aware of the role of cattle and buffalo. Contact with infected water as a mode of transmission was reported by 57.9% of the population. Only 30.8% of the subjects were aware of that the infection can go through skin breeches. Farming as a risk activity was reported by 63.5% of the patients, but knowledge on other exposure activities were less than 20%. Paddy field work and cleaning garbage were correctly identified as risk occupations by 89.7% and 27.6% of the sample, respectively. Respondents were aware of fever (86%), malaise (30.8%), headache (29.6%) and muscle tenderness (28.8%) as main clinical features of the disease. Most of them (73.7%) knew leptospirosis as a lethal condition and 39.5% were aware of chemoprophylaxis.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

Although there is not adequate information on MDD prevalence in some areas of Iran, the overall current prevalence of MDD in the country is high and females are at the greater risk of disease