

IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON CONSUMPTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES OF THE EMPLOYED COMMUNITY IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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COVID-19 pandemic had affected people all over the world, including Sri Lanka. Fruits and vegetable supply was hampered due to travel restrictions. *Colombo*, the most urbanized district, was the most affected. This research was aimed to examine the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on consumption of fruits and vegetables of *Colombo* district employed community. Data were collected from a survey conducted with a semi-structured questionnaire. Stratified random sampling was used to select 204 participants from all divisional secretariat divisions of *Colombo* district. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, parametric and non-parametric tests. Majority of participants (64.2%) had non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cholesterol and high blood pressure. Females had significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher Body Mass Index (BMI) on average than the age appropriate BMI whereas it was not significantly ($p > 0.05$) different in males. The study revealed that in average there was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in consumption of fruits, roots, tuber crops, vegetables, pulses and legumes, except leafy vegetables, which was significantly increased ($p < 0.05$). But, people with non-communicable diseases had consumed significantly higher amount of fruits and leafy vegetables ($p < 0.05$), but no significant change was present for roots and tuber crops, vegetable, pulses and legumes ($p > 0.05$). Per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables was 197.18 ± 97.19 g among the *Colombo* district working people, which was significantly less than the recommended quantity (400g). Home gardening and mobile vendors had contributed to the increase and non-change in consumption of fruits and vegetables. Thus, it can be concluded that on average, COVID-19 pandemic had not significantly ($p > 0.05$) changed the consumption of fruits and vegetables but it has increased the consumption of leafy vegetables, compared to the situation prior to pandemic, among *Colombo* district employed community.

Keywords: Body Mass Index, Home gardening, Leafy vegetables, Non-communicable diseases