

MED/OP/01

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Health Officials in Dengue Prevention in Sri Lanka

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Background: Despite the implementation of the National Action Plan for Dengue Prevention and Control (2019–2023), Sri Lanka continues to experience dengue outbreaks. Health officials play a pivotal role in translating policy into practice, yet evidence on their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) remains limited.

Objective: To evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of health personnel towards national dengue prevention policies in Sri Lanka.

Methods: Cross-sectional mixed-methods study of 80 health officials, Medical Officers, Public Health Inspectors, Field Workers, and administrative staff from national and regional units. The quantitative questionnaire (WHO KAP-adapted, translated, and pre-tested) was administered using stratified random sampling by job role. Within each stratum, candidates were computer-randomized from rosters and invited until the pre-specified targets were met, with non-responders replaced by the next randomized candidate. Ten key-informant interviews were purposively sampled. Quantitative analyses used descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA and χ^2 ; qualitative data were thematically analyzed

Results: Of the participants, Satisfactory knowledge was observed in 27.5% ($\geq 4/5$); positive attitudes in 51.3% ($\geq 20/25$); and good practices in 11.3% ($\geq 20/28$). Knowledge and practice varied by job role ($p = 0.007$ and $p = 0.006$), while attitudes did not ($p = 0.080$). There was no association between years of service and total KAP ($r=0.18$, $p=0.115$), nor by sex ($t(57) = 1.53$, $p=0.131$). Interviews highlighted delayed resource allocation, fragmented surveillance, limited role-specific training and gaps between policy and operationalization.

Conclusion: The findings highlight significant gaps between national dengue prevention policies and their operationalization, particularly at the frontline. Targeted role-specific training, improved resource allocation, and strengthened multi-sectoral collaboration are vital for translating policies into effective action and achieving the national dengue prevention targets.

Keywords: Dengue, Health officials, KAP