

## KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES IN REUSING HOUSEHOLD PLASTIC CONTAINERS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

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Plastics are widely reused for household purposes. However, improper handling and lack of awareness lead to microbial contamination of reusable plastics. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the knowledge, practices and attitudes towards reusing disposable household plastic containers for food and beverages among a group of undergraduates. A descriptive, cross-sectional study was carried out with 354 undergraduates. A self-administered pretested questionnaire was used to gather data in five sections: socio-demographic data, practices on reusing household plastic containers, perceived hygiene scale on practices, knowledge and attitude. A score of 1 was given for each correct response. A score of more than 75% was considered good, 50-74% moderate and less than 50% poor for each category. Among 231 respondents, the majority had reused plastic containers such as water bottles, ice cream tubs and lunch boxes. In terms of overall knowledge, it was revealed that 43% of undergraduates had poor knowledge regarding the reuse of household plastic containers for storing food and beverages. On the other hand, only 26% of the participants had poor attitudes about reusing household plastic container usage with food and beverages. Female respondents had relatively higher attitudes compared to males. Moreover, 35% of participants were found to have poor practices in reusing plastic containers for food and beverages. The research findings revealed a poor level of knowledge among participants, attitudes and practices regarding disposable plastic containers used for food and beverages, which can lead to food or water-borne illnesses. Thus, the study highlights the need for further educational programs on reusing disposable plastics.

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