

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Dietary Salt Intake Among OPD and Hypertension Clinic Attendees at Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

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A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted at Teaching Hospital Peradeniya to assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) regarding dietary salt intake among adult attendees of the Outpatient Department (OPD) and Hypertension Clinic. The sample included 403 randomly selected participants (OPD: 103; Clinic: 300). Data were collected via a pre-tested, self-administered bilingual questionnaire. Of the participants, 62.8% were female, 59.8% were over 40 years, and 65.5% had education level A/L or above. Analysis using Jamovi and Excel included chi-square tests to assess associations between demographic variables and KAP indicators. Clinic attendees demonstrated higher levels of satisfactory knowledge (77.7%) and practices (60.3%) compared to OPD attendees (59.0% and 47.6% respectively). Female participants (81.0%) and those aged ≥ 40 years (77.0%) showed significantly better knowledge ($p < 0.001$). Practices were significantly better among older adults (61.0%) and individuals with higher education (78.4%, $p = 0.025$). Residence (urban vs. rural) showed no significant association with either knowledge or practices ($p > 0.05$). The average estimated salt intake was 9.15 g/day, nearly double the WHO-recommended limit. Television was the most cited health information source (62.0%), especially among clinic attendees, while social media use was higher among younger OPD participants. The study highlights a discrepancy between knowledge and behavioural practices across both groups and suggests that greater emphasis is needed on behaviour-focused interventions. Rather than suggesting conclusive causality, these findings support integration of targeted dietary counselling in outpatient settings and the strategic use of media platforms for public health messaging.

Keywords: Dietary salt intake, knowledge-attitude-practice (KAP), hypertension, health communication, Sri Lanka