

Awareness about Early Symptoms and Risk Factors of Myocardial Infarction among People in a Grama Niladhari Division in Anuradhapura District

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Myocardial infarction (MI) is one of the most devastating disorders under coronary heart diseases. Though many studies have been done to determine the awareness about early symptoms and risk factors of MI among general population throughout the world, no extensive studies have been reported from Sri Lanka in this regard. Aim of this study was to investigate the awareness of early symptoms and the risk factors of MI among general population in a Grama Niladhari Division in Anuradhapura District. A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted in a Grama Niladhari Division in Anuradhapura district among 375 participants by using systematic sampling method. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Cross-tabulations were done to explore the associations between independent and dependent variables. Of the 375 participants, 45.3% (n=170) were males and 54.7 % were females. Out of 375 participants, 144 (38.4%) had a poor awareness about early symptoms and risk factors of MI, while 131 (34.9%) of participants had average awareness. Only 100 (26.7%) had good awareness. The majority of participants had recognized central chest pain (73.3%, n=275), shortness of breath (71.2%, n=267) and pain radiating along the left arm (69.6%, n=261) as early symptoms of MI. High blood cholesterol (75.7%, n=284), high blood pressure (72.5%, n=272) and smoking (70.1%, n=263) were the most frequently mentioned risk factors. Awareness about early symptoms had a significant association with educational level (P<0.05). Our findings show that one-third of participants had poor awareness about early symptoms and risk factors of MI. Awareness about early symptoms had a significant association with educational level. These findings indicate that the implementation of community-related awareness programs on risk factors and early symptoms of MI among Sri Lankan general population would be important to minimize the morbidity and mortality of MI.

Keywords: Myocardial infarction, Early symptoms, Risk factors, Cardiovascular diseases