

Knowledge and Perceptions of Food Misconceptions and Facts: A Study among a Group of Sri-Lankan Adults in the *Puttalam* District

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Food choices significantly impact on the health and well-being of people. Despite the increasing availability of nutrition related information, food myths remain widespread among adults, potentially influencing dietary behaviors, nutritional status, and the risk of chronic diseases. This cross-sectional survey aimed to investigate the knowledge and perceptions (KP) of a sample of adult Sri-Lankans in Puttalam District regarding a series of food myths and facts. Sixty-five adult participants were recruited (32 males and 33 females, aged 25-50yrs, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims) using an interviewer administered questionnaire. Each participant was directed to respond to 30 KP-testing statements in 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (+2, +1, 0, -1, -2 scores for very correct, correct, no idea, incorrect and very incorrect responses respectively). The results showed that 69% of participants scored poor KP (scoring- 0 to negative values) and 31% of them scored high KP (scoring positive values). More than 90% of participants believed drinking a glass of water with lemon and honey helps in weight loss, drinking hot water after having a meal will remove fat from the body, spinach is rich in iron compared to other green leaves and eating more carrots will improve the eyesight. Only 6 out of 30 thirty statements were correctly scored by the majority. It was concluded that the study sample had poor nutritional KP, that needs to be debunked, to promote good nutrition among adults.

Keywords: Food myths, Health, Nutritional knowledge, Perception, Sri-Lanka

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