



ANNUAL RESEARCH SESSION 2022
ARS-FHCS-2022

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

**“HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN THE ERA OF
NEW NORMAL”**

15TH DECEMBER 2022

**FACULTY OF HEALTH-CARE SCIENCES
EASTERN UNIVERSITY, SRI LANKA**

ARSFHCS 004

KNOWLEDGE ON BURN INJURIES AND FIRST AID METHODS AMONG PEADIATRIC CAREGIVERS PRESENTING TO CLINICS AT TEACHING HOSPITAL BATTICALOA

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Background: Burn is a global public health problem which causes around 180 000 deaths annually. Burn injuries cause a significant number of mild to moderate disabilities. Children are more prone to get accidental burn injuries, mainly scalds from hot water/liquids. It is the parents who should be aware of the seriousness of burn injuries and prevent their children suffering from burns. Therefore, it is important to assess parents' knowledge on burn injuries, their prevention and the efficient use of first aid measures. It is essential to know about erroneous first aid practices to give the correct knowledge and teach them the beneficial first aid methods to minimize the damage to the body by burns. This study aimed to find out the knowledge of caregivers, on causative agents, preventive factors, first aid methods of burn injuries and their preferable modes of gaining more understanding of burn injury first aid practices and to know about their personal experience of burn injuries.

Methods & Materials: A pretested interviewer administered questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge of caregivers who attend the paediatric clinics at Teaching hospital, Batticaloa, on causative agents, preventive methods and the use of first aid practices of burn injuries. Caregivers who were willing to participate, were included in the study irrespective of their age and the relationship with the child. Data was analysed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 28.

Results: Out of 193 caregivers who participated in the study, 67.36% had good knowledge, and 15.54% had excellent knowledge about burn injuries and first aid methods. Seventeen per cent of them had fair knowledge, but none of the participants had poor knowledge. Participants' knowledge had a significant association with their educational level (Likelihood ratio= 77.425, df= 12, p < 0.001) and occupation (Likelihood ratio= 38.522,

df= 8, $p < 0.001$). Almost everyone (91.71%) wished to learn more about first aid practices related to burns and the preferable source is health care professionals. A quarter (26.42%, N=51) of the participants have experienced a burn injury in their children, but 17% didn't do any first aid.

Discussion & Conclusion: Since the educated care givers elicited good knowledge on burn injuries health promotion in this field should be focused on the poorly educated and those involved in unskilled jobs and unemployed in the community. Health education programmes are expected to be conducted by health professionals.

Keywords: *Burn injuries, First aid methods, Paediatric caregivers, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka*