

5.8 Lymphatic filariasis in selected endemic communities in Gampaha district, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Background: Epidemiological surveys are important tools for monitoring progress of lymphatic filariasis (Lf) eradication programs. **Objective:** The objective of this study was to identify the current status of Lf in Gampaha district, following the completion of 5 year mass-treatment program (MDA), by using traditional night blood screening test. **Study design:** Study sites were selected within the Lf endemic area while following guidelines of Anti Filariasis Campaign and study population consist of all individual living within the 500 m radius randomly selected land area.

Methodology: Night blood screening was carried out between May to August 2009 in 9 sites in 3 closely situated Medical Officer of Health (MOH) areas of Gampaha district. All participants were screened for Microfilariae (mf) after examination by a medical officer for clinical manifestations of Lf and the awareness and practices of participating individuals of >15 years with regard to MDA programme surveyed using an interviewer administrated structured questionnaire. **Results:** Of the 1073 participants (286 children, 787 adult) screened, 6 were positive in 2 sites for mf, giving mf positive rates of 0.5% and 3.4% respectively in Hekiththa and Peliyagoda sites. While giving mean mf density (mf/60 μ l blood) of 2 and 7 respectively. Questionnaire analysis revealed that, of the 1073 participants, 78% were aware of MDA and from that 65% had received the drugs and from that nearly 50% had taken the drugs. Out of those 50%, only 34% had taken it continuously all five years. According to the clinical investigation of 1073 participants, 7%, 3% and nearly 1% had symptoms of headlice, Lyphoedema and Hydrocoela respectively. **Discussion:** mf rate of Lf in this study population is greater than the currently reported in the country (0.18%). Therefore, an intensive MDA programme is recommended to contain the spread of infection.