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Awareness on the Waste Management Practices and Causes for Increased Urban Waste Generation among the General Public in Western Province, Sri Lanka

Peiris P.C.*, Perera B.O.L., Jayathilake J.M.N.J.

School of Biomedical Sciences, International Institute of Health Sciences, Welisara, Sri Lanka

**pcpeiris99@gmail.com*

Abstract

The upsurge in waste generation and improper management of waste possess serious issues to individuals' health and the environment. The administration of waste holds a crucial part in waste organization and proper waste management practices are essential to control the increase of urban waste and associated hazards. The present study aimed to assess the awareness on causes for increased urban waste and the practices of the general public on waste management. A descriptive cross-sectional study in Western Province, Sri Lanka was conducted among males and females within the age group of 20 to 60. 150 individuals were recruited using the quota sampling method and a self-administered questionnaire was distributed in English, Sinhala, and Tamil languages. Additionally, using SPSS software, the results were statistically analyzed. As per the data that was analyzed, 51.3% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30. Most of the participants, 87.3% were aware of the increase in urban waste, and 88.6% stated the management of waste can hold a positive impact on suitable development. However, 40.6% have stated industrial waste as the major source associated with the surging urban waste indicating the unawareness of household waste as the primary source. Furthermore, though 84.6% divide inorganic and organic waste, according to 64% of participants, e-waste is not discarded using proper channels. Thus, there is an increased risk of health implications as e-waste chemical constituents could be hazardous to both human health and the environment. In the opinion of 89.3%, further training on waste management should be carried out while 52% of the respondents have declared not attaining any practices on waste management. Hence, an increase in the urban waste can be visible as the participants were inexperienced and unfamiliar with efficient waste disposal and management methods. The evidence that is currently available from this study suggests that there is a need to enhance community awareness, encourage training, and change people's attitudes regarding waste. A comprehensive infection control program combined with safe disposal of waste is recommended to achieve sustainable and economically viable waste management.

Keywords: Urban, Waste management, e-waste, Training