

Patients with hypothyroidism attending the Endocrine Clinic in Teaching Hospital Jaffna: Patient characteristics, adherence to management and associated factors

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Background and Objective: Patient characteristics and adherence to management are major contributors to better clinical outcomes. The objective of this study was to describe the patients with hypothyroidism attending the Endocrine Clinic in Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Methods: This hospital-based cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 401 patients with hypothyroidism attending the Endocrine Clinic, Teaching Hospital Jaffna, using an interviewer-administered, face-validated questionnaire in the KoboCollect app. Questions regarding patient characteristics, knowledge on hypothyroidism and adherence to management were included in the questionnaire. All patients above 18 years who attended the clinic were recruited. Data were analysed using SPSS; independent sample t-test and correlation coefficient were used for statistical analysis with a 5% critical level.

Results: A greater percentage of participants were females (80.8%), married (69.1%), Hindus (82%), completed GCE O/L or A/L (65.6%), housewives (39.4%) or unemployed (18%) with a monthly income between Rs. 21,000 and 40,000 (46.6%) and diagnosed with hypothyroidism for 1 and 5 years (67.8%). Percentages of participants who correctly understood the meaning of the thyroid gland and the concept of hypothyroidism were 27.4% and 15.7%, respectively. Knowledge on hypothyroidism was associated with religion ($p=0.002$) and duration of diagnosis ($p=0.002$) and there was no evidence for association with sex, age, marital status, family income, educational status, and employment status. All participants knew the correct method of taking thyroxine tablets. Adherence to management was associated with sex ($p=0.038$) and there was no evidence for association with age, religion, marital status, family income, educational status, employment status, and duration of diagnosis. Knowledge on hypothyroidism and its management was positively correlated with adherence to management and it was statistically significant ($r=0.141$, $p=0.005$).

Conclusions: Knowledge on hypothyroidism was associated with religion and duration of diagnosis. Adherence to management was associated with sex. Religion, duration of diagnosis, and sex could be considered in improving the knowledge and adherence to management.

Keywords: Hypothyroidism, Knowledge, Patient characteristics, Adherence to management