

Abstract

Caregiver knowledge, practices, and attitudes regarding dengue fever in mandalay, Myanmar

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background: Myanmar, a low-income country, consistently has a high burden of dengue fever, with the majority of fatalities occurring in young children. Yet, little has been done to evaluate caregivers' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) toward protecting their children from dengue.

method: This study took place in Mandalay, Myanmar's largest city. Local caregivers to children (up to 12 years of age), participated in a cross-sectional survey regarding their knowledge of dengue fever, risk perception, and uptake of protective health behaviors.

results: The median age of children was seven years. Most caregivers (n= 26) were familiar with dengue, with 58% speaking to a doctor about dengue and 71% feeling confident in recognizing symptoms. Additionally, 96% of caregivers believed dengue was a serious health concern for their child(ren). Level of education was the most predictive variable for protective health behaviors and perceptions related to dengue, risk perception ($p = 0.02$), the use of insecticide-treated clothing ($p = 0.04$), safe water storage in/around the home ($p = 0.05$), and indoor mosquito repellent use ($p = 0.05$).

discussion: This pilot study underscores that knowledge of dengue as a health concern for children is high among caregivers. However, the relationship between education and health behaviors highlights the role of social determinants of health in preventing mosquito-borne diseases. Improving the educational attainment of female caregivers in Myanmar (85% of caregivers in this survey) is warranted to protect children's health in Myanmar. The KAP survey sought to gain insight into the health behaviors of caregivers related to dengue. This small study represents one of the first steps in an important line of research in the country. A large scale study would be beneficial to further understand caregivers' knowledge and preventative measures taken against the disease. Only then, will overall understanding of child health in the country improve, as it relates to dengue.

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