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Assessment of public awareness of histopathology services in the North Colombo Teaching Hospital

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Introduction and objectives: Histopathology is eclipsed by other clinical fields and the public is often unaware of the process of histopathological diagnosis and its crucial role in managing diseases. This study aimed to assess the above.

Methodology: Basic knowledge of the histopathological diagnostic process, the importance of the report, and the action to be taken following receipt of the report were assessed via an interviewer-administered questionnaire to the patients and their relatives within the hospital.

Results: The study sample included 100 participants: 39% males, and 61% females (age range 15-76). 90% were educated at least, up to the GCE-ordinary level. 57% of participants knew the basics of histopathological processes. 57% knew who examined the pathology samples and 60% knew where they were examined. 52% were aware of the basic equipment used. 38% were aware of the time taken to obtain a report. 44% were aware of the rapid methods of histological examination. 82% appreciated the significance of their report and its role in disease management. They were keen to collect the report (82%), show it to the clinician early (88%) and preserve the report for life (64%). 82% desired meeting a histopathology-related doctor and 52% thought this would help them to understand their disease better.

Discussion and conclusions: The majority of the public was aware of the significance of the histopathology report. However, a considerable proportion lacked an understanding of some aspects of histopathological processes (e.g. time taken for issue of reports). It was interesting that most of the participants were keen to meet a histopathologist. This would be a possible opportunity for histopathologists to highlight their role and enhance public awareness of histopathology services.

Keywords: histopathology services, awareness public

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