

Impact of Pesticide Use Practices on Farmers' Health: A Case Study in Wijayagama and Eheranda in Matale District

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The study documented a serious consequence of the indiscriminate use of pesticides for the farmers' health in Wijayagama and Eheranda, two rural villages located in Naminigama Grama Niladhari division of Wilgamuwa Divisional Secretariat division in Matale district. The farmers residing in both villages, who applied pesticides by themselves, were selected as the sample and it was 110. Primary data were collected through pre-tested questionnaires. Secondary data were collected from the reports of National Census and Statistical Department and Office of the Registrar of Pesticide. Over 55% of farmers were found to be overusing pesticides. Only 11% of farmer's usage of personnel protective equipment to be called as "good" and 89% belongs to "bad" usage of personnel protective equipment. The 16% of the farmers not affected, 43% lightly affected, 30% moderately affected, 11% highly affected and nobody was very highly affected. Therefore, only 16% of the farmers were not affected and 84% of the farmers reported to having one or more considered acute pesticide poisoning symptoms, after routine application of pesticides. Considered acute pesticide poisoning symptoms occurrence was positive for 85% of the farmers and negative for 15% of the farmers for the previous cropping seasons, during or after pesticide application. This study gave indications that a majority of farm households do not take cognizance of the long term and short term health hazards of pesticides in pesticide use practices and acute pesticide poisoning symptoms are under-reported in Wijayagama and Eheranda in Matale district.

Keywords: Pesticide use practices, Farmers' health