

The Exploration of School Kids' Knowledge on Personal Hygiene, Food Safety and Zoonotic Diseases and Veterinary Education and Profession

Easrat Jahan Esha^{1*}, Mohammad Solaiman², M Sawkat Anwer³ and Md Ahasanul Hoque³

¹International Veterinary Student Association (IVSA), Bangladesh

²One Health Young Voice (OHYV), Bangladesh

³Leader of OIE Twinning Project, Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (Bangladesh) and Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, USA

***Corresponding Author:** Easrat Jahan Esha, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Bangladesh.

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Abstract

Introduction and Aim: Generally, school kids (SKD) are not adequately made aware of personal hygiene, food safety and zoonotic diseases in Bangladesh. The aim of this study was to assess the level of knowledge of SKD on personal hygiene, food safety and zoonosis.

Methodology: With the support of the OIE Twinning Bangladesh Project, SKD Programme on multiple schools was organized by International Veterinary Student Association and One Health Young Voice, Bangladesh in 2018. Grade-V kids were engaged in survey participation, video and poster presentation. Example findings on SKD (N = 57) have been presented below.

Results and Discussion: Responses to personal hygiene revealed that 38% wash hands with soap after defecation; 100% think that cutting nails using teeth may cause health hazard; 96% wash hands after touching animals; 74% use tissues while sneezing at school; 96% think open urination causes unhealthy environment; 72 - 95% think drinking road-side water, cold drinks, excessive tea or coffee is not beneficial for health; 95 - 96% understand eating street food while walking is unhealthy; 82% said that they would consult a doctor if they suffer from illness.

About animal diseases, 35% are familiar with "Rabies" and 25% are familiar with "Fractures"; Posters on three important zoonotic diseases (Rabies, anthrax and tuberculosis) were displayed and discussed about health risks, prevention and control. The kids were focused and enthusiastic to learn about these diseases.

Conclusion: Most of the kids are aware of their personal hygiene, food safety and health maintenance. Zoonotic diseases are poorly recognized by the SKD.

Keywords: Personal Hygiene; Food Safety; Zoonotic Diseases; Veterinary Education

Introduction

The veterinary education and profession is poorly respected in different sections of the society in Bangladesh. Even the school kids have the same narrow outlook for this profession. This status quo is very alarming for the future of this profession if this attitude continues without intervention. That is why a school kids program was organized to give them an introduction to veterinary education and profession. Our aim is to highlight the veterinary profession in school kids mind as they are the future generation. If they get good knowledge about zoonotic diseases they not only secure themselves but also spread the learning among their parents, neighbours and society. We can't ignore this huge population of little minds if we want to bring prosperity in our country. Generally, School kids are not adequately made aware of their personal hygiene, zoonotic diseases and One Health in this country. But the good thing is that kids are eager to learn

new things at this stage of life. If they are exposed these important issues early on, they are more likely to understand and accept the importance of veterinary medicine in the society.

Kids from a selected school were engaged in a set of activities including survey participation, video and poster presentation on personal hygiene, zoonotic diseases and "One Health" issues. This was a unique program by "International Veterinary Student's Association, Bangladesh" and "One Health Young Voice". It should be mentioned that the program was possible in part because of generous and foresightful support from OIE Veterinary Education Twinning Project [1-5].

Materials and Methods

Hence, a survey was conducted on 57 school kids of the 5th grade of Wireless Jhautola Colony High School, Chattogram on August 14, 2018. The goal was to assess their level of knowledge regarding personal hygiene, food safety and diseases. The questionnaire was presented in Bangla to the students (30 girls and 27 boys) through a lively Powerpoint presentation. The questionnaire included closed and open ended, true/false and scenario based questions. After the completion of the survey, they were shown a video documentary to make them appreciate the significance of the veterinary education as well as the profession. Afterwards, three different posters were displayed to instill awareness of common zoonotic diseases. Then the kids were asked some simple questions by our volunteers based on presentation. The proud members of IVSA and OHYV, Bangladesh successfully steered the session. Some survey results are reported in this manuscript. After this survey all the information that are shared by the kids were read thoroughly and tallied to get the right response.

Results

Response to the queries of the personal hygiene, behavior and activities were as follows

Responses to personal hygiene revealed that around 97% kids usually brush their teeth, wash their mouth and drink water when they wake up in the morning; about 93% kids brush their teeth twice a day; 62% kids wash their hands and feet with water and soap and 38% kids wash their hands only with soap after defecation; nearly 70% of the kids wash their hands with soap before and after having breakfast; 100% kids regularly use nail cutter or blades to trim their nails and almost 95% kids wash their hands with soap after cutting their nails; 100% kids don't like to cut nails using their teeth because they think this is a kind of health hazard; 100% kids felt they should thoroughly wash their hands, face and legs after arriving home from school or outside; nearly 75% of the kids responded that they should take a bath during the day; 81% of the kids responded that they should clean their clothes when they gets dirty; nearly 74% kids gave affirmative response when asked about touching pets and livestock on the way to school and around 96% kids responded that they wash their hands with soap and water if they touched any animal; close to 68% of the kids responded that they clean their clothes and heads with water from a nearby source if birds defecated on them on the way to school; approximately 74% of kids cover their nose and mouth using tissue paper while sneezing at school; around 88% kids wash their hands with water if they pick their nose; 100% of the kids use a handkerchief or tissue paper to wipe out nasal discharge; nearly 98% kids defecate in the toilet when they are at school and 86% kids responded that they should sleep at a specific time at night, around 77% of the kids responded that they should set up a mosquito net, switch off the light, pack up their bag and freshen up before sleep; around 93% of the kids responded that they feel good when they read books.

Response to the questions about drinking water and food safety are given below

Around 96% of the kids answered that they should drink ad libitum clean water each day; all kids like to bring food and water to school from their home; 72 - 95% of the kids think drinking roadside water, cold drinks, excessive tea or coffee is not beneficial for their health; 96% of the kids like the food when it is prepared by their mom, dad and/or sister, Close to 98% wash the cover of tiffin box with clean water if it fell to the ground before fixing it to the box again; around 95 - 96% kids understand eating street food while walking is not good for their health; close to 91% kids used to dump the food particles in the dustbin if it fell on the ground while eating.

Response against some health related questions were as follows

Around 65% of the kids said they would stop their father or someone else if they smoked in front of them; 82% of the kids said they would consult a doctor if they sneezed, coughed or suffered from a fever.

Response to the queries related to animals and their diseases were as follows

Kids like lions and tigers (9% to 16%), dogs and cats (9% to 32%), pet birds (56%) and ruminants (9%). When asked about animal diseases, around 35% kids responded that they are familiar with "Rabies" and 25% familiar with "fractures"; around 35% learned about Rabies from their class textbooks.

A video documentary related to veterinary education and the profession was played to the kids followed by a supplementary discussion and question answer session. The video contained the activities of a modern dairy farm, zoo, pet bird dispensary and animal hospital. After the video presentation, the kids were asked about their goals in life. In reply, approximately 51% of kids responded that they want to be a doctor, 14% engineer and 12% veterinarian.

Posters on three important zoonotic diseases (Rabies, Anthrax and Tuberculosis) were displayed and discussed with the kids about transmission, health risks, prevention and control.

Conclusion

In conclusion, responses that are obtained from the questionnaire survey indicate that most of the kids of Wireless Jhautola Colony High School are aware of their personal hygiene, food safety and health maintenance. The kids were focused on learning about these diseases enthusiastically. This scenario implies that at present day health education given great importance for school going kids in Bangladesh. Veterinary profession is gaining popularity in recent days but not satisfactory perhaps because of its unfamiliarity and insufficient activities taken to familiarize the profession by personnels in this sector. So, its high time for all veterinary students and organizations to come forward and educate our future generation as they can be the bridge of spreading concept and new knowledge about veterinary profession. School kids program is the primary goal of us to achieve that dream. However, it was an excellent day where kids and members of IVSA and OHYV learned from each other. IVSA and OHYV, Bangladesh have the plans to scale up the "School kid program" in other schools as well.

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