

ABSTRACT

The Prevalence and Management of Childhood Diarrhoea at the Cornwall Regional Hospital January – March 2002

Paula Black

A cross-sectional study was done to determine the prevalence and management of childhood diarrhoea at Cornwall Regional Hospital. Data was collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires, a retrospective docket review and focus group discussions.

There were 236 cases of diarrhoea in children 5 years and under and this constituted a relatively small portion (1.5%) of the caseload at Cornwall's Accident and Emergency Department. Sixty-one percent of the children were in the younger age group (0-1 years old) while 38.9% were in the older age group (2-5 years old). The highest percentage of cases (54.5%) came from Urban St. James with the communities of Flankers and Mount Salem being the modal address.

Self-administered questionnaires completed by 19 Doctors and Nurses on the Paediatric wards showed that they were well trained and motivated. Parents and caretakers of these small children were also well informed and proactive as it relates to treating and managing diarrhoea.

A special Health Education/Promotion programme for parents and the wider community and continuing education programmes for Health Professionals were recommended to help improve the home and health facility management of childhood diarrhoea.

Keywords: Paula Black; Diarrhoea; Cornwall Regional Hospital.