

ABSTRACT

Despite Kingston and St Andrew generating over fifty percent (50%) of Jamaica's solid waste very little documentation has been done about the effects of solid waste management on those who are directly involved in the operational aspects of the occupation. This cross-sectional study was conducted to identify;

- knowledge and attitudes of sanitation workers in relation to their own health promotion, disease prevention and well-being;
- knowledge and attitudes related to occupational health and safety and health education;

To determine the;

- proportion of sanitation workers who suffer injuries on the job and types and severity of injuries;
- proportion of sanitation workers who are covered by health insurance and how same is financed;
- systems of compensation/assistance for work related injuries or illnesses; and;

To identify the;

- proportion of sanitation workers who are provided with protective gear for use on the job and if they are used on the job.

A sample of one hundred and six (106) consenting participants comprising all categories of solid waste management operational workers were selected at the Riverton City dump site and the Metropolitan Parks and Markets garage on Hagley Park Road. On consent a questionnaire was administered based around the previously mentioned objectives.

Majority participants were aware that cigarette smoking could be harmful to their health yet most of them were smokers. Also, significantly 80.2% who smoked were backed by 86.8% who consumed alcohol – χ^2 14.1; p-value < 0.005. Participants thought they should be exposed to occupational health and safety seminars and workshops and also health educational activities. Most participants made great effort to remain injury free, not knowing if they would achieve any benefits from being ill and away from work.

Most respondents, 85, (80.2%) felt comfortable with their present body weight, however, 63, (59.4%) did not know if their present weight was their normal body weight. Eighty two (82), 77.4% among the respondents did not have a blood pressure check for a long time.

With respect to health insurance coverage, very few workers were privileged mainly because of paltry remuneration. Issuing of protective gear was sparse and there should be priority in this regard.

Keywords: Occupational health and safety, health educational, health

insurance, remuneration, protective gear, body weight, blood pressure.