ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study is being conducted to identify the mothers’ perception, knowledge and practice on the ORS use in the treatment of acute diarrhoea among children under five years of age in Ben Tre.

The subjects were 260 mothers who had children under five years - experienced diarrhoea during 2001. The data collection was conducted between 1st to 31st January 2002. A structured interview questionnaire and checklist form were used to collect the information in this study.

The majority (68.8%) of mothers used ORS, in which 91.1% used ORS packets, 8.9% use SSS, and 81.2% used ORS with high proper level. Nevertheless, mothers needed to improve the practice of using ORS correctly, to use clean cooled, boiled water to mix ORS/SSS solution, and shake the solution in the bottle. Mothers had a high perception on severity of diarrhoea, benefits of ORS use, but barriers to using ORS were still perceived with a high percentage: ORS/SSS cannot be kept more than 24 hour; children did not like to drink the ORS/SSS solution and they were nauseas or vomited if they drank it. The factor most related to using ORS properly was the mothers’ knowledge. Only 23.5% of mothers had high knowledge level. The other factors that had relationship with the proper ORS use were health personnel, pamphlet, television, the usefulness of ORS and the dosage of ORS and sufficiency of information on ORS. Besides, the nearest distance, keeping of ORS at home, radio, pamphlet, newspaper, and poster also had the relationship with the ORS use.

The main recommendation is to improve the provincial health promotion and health education programs by taking into account perception, especially knowledge of mothers. Mothers also should identify the signs of diarrhoea, and dehydration during acute diarrhoea. The programs should focus on the above-mentioned barriers, interesting methods of communication. Moreover, the province’ Control of Diarrhoea Disease program should review and regulate its activities related to the production and supply ORS.