

Pesticide safety practice and its determinants among small scale vegetables farmers in Eyasi area, Arusha region Tanzania

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Abstract

Background: Strategies to achieve the millennium agricultural development goals include increased use of pesticides to increase agricultural production in poor countries. However, the increased availability and use of such chemicals need to be paralleled with national and personal level practices to maximize safety for communities and environment.

Aim and methods: The aim of this study was to determine the pesticide safety practices among rural farmers in Karatu District in Northern Tanzania. Farmers practicing horticulture farming in Mang'ola Division were interviewed about their practices during and after pesticides application.

Results: The study included 148 farmers of whom 79.7% were male. A significantly high proportion (77.7%) of the farmers did not use protective gear while applying pesticides. A notable percentage ate while applying pesticides (17.6%), one out of five took fluids and about a quarter smoked cigarettes. Factors found to be significantly associated with those practices were education, marital status, reporting frequent household spraying, long duration since starting to apply pesticides and farm size ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Given the lack of protective behavior, it is then very important that farmers and farm workers are reminded of the hazardous nature of pesticides and the need to have their health monitored regularly. Special educational and information strategies have to focus on those with low education, who are unmarried, working on large farms and have a high frequency of applying pesticides. To enhance sustained education and supervisions, community level surveillance and supervisors could be introduced.