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ORIGINAL TITLE	Physiological measurments in female patients with thyroid disorders
DEGREE	M.Phil.
YEAR	1997
INSTITUTE	University of Peradeniya
LOCATION	UP(MED)
MAIN HEADING	THYROID DISEASES
ABSTRACT	<p>Endemic goitre in Sri Lanka is widely prevalent in the endemic belt which extends throughout the Western, Sabaragamuwa, Southern, Central and part of the Uva provinces; ie the whole of the south-western sector of Sri Lanka. Female goitrous patients attending the thyroid clinics at the Nuclear Medicine Unit, Peradeniya, between 9.00 am and 10.00 an each day were examined and investigated. They were categorized according to their biochemical status - Total Thyroxine (TT4,), Total Triiodothyronine (TT3) and Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) concentrations, into the following four groups - "Euthyroid", Raised TSH only, Hypothyroid and Hyperthyroid groups. Their ages ranged from 14-73 years. In the "euthyroid" group (simple goitre group with normal thyroid hormone levels), the gland was assessed according to the classification endorsed by the WHO and the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD), and categorized into 3 grades according to goitre size. The tests included measurements of TT4, and TT'3 by standard RIA radioimmuno assay) techniques and 1'SH levels by the IRMA (immunoradiometric assay) method. 2 hour and 24 hour radioiodine uptakes, following the administration of a tracer dose of ""I were also measured. Parameters of respiratory function, anthropometric measurements, haematological measurements and physiological responses to a low ambient temperature. were also carried out in all groups and compared between these groups. The results were statistically analyzed using the Student's Independent t test, which was carried out between the three grades of the "euthyroid" group, as well as between the four groups of varying thyroid activity. With regard to comparison of physiological parameters at room temperature (28.8 - 29°C) with those obtained in the air conditioned room (22.1 22.5°C). the Student's paired t test was used. The significance level was accepted at the 0.05 level. Spearman's Correlation co efficients were also carried out to find the relationship between goitre size and thyroid hormone levels in the goitrous "euthyroid" group. The significance level was accepted at the 0.05 level. The results of the thyroid function tests indicated that in "euthyroid" goitre (which represents the simple goitre group) - 1) An increase in the size of the gland is associated with a longer duration of goitre. 2) TT 3 levels increased as the grade increased, indicating a progressive increase in thyroid activity with an increase in the size of the gland. 3) Serum TSH levels dropped significantly as the goitre</p>

size increased. 4) RAIU at 2 hours and 24 hours increased with an increase in size of the gland, indicating an increase in thyroid activity as the gland grew larger. It is evident from the results that thyroid enlargement, iodine uptake and triiodothyronine secretion are independent of TSH because a significant fall in serum TSH (though within the normal hormone limits) is associated with an increase in size of the gland and a significant increase in TT 3 concentration. The goitre patients were categorized according to their hormonal status in to a "euthyroid" group, a raised TSH group, a hypothyroid and hyperthyroid group. With regard to the RAIU after 24 hours, the hypothyroid group, showed a significantly lower 24 hour uptake when compared with the "euthyroid" group (p