

Common health problems perceived by the elders living in elders' homes within Kandy municipal area of Sri Lanka

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There is a rapid growth of the ageing population in Sri Lanka. It has been estimated that the population of the elders will be a quarter of the total population by 2030. One of the main reasons for the rapid increase in the ageing population is increased life expectancy. Due to the complex life patterns, children fail to look after their elders in their own homes. As a result the number of elders in elders' homes is gradually increasing. The study was conducted to describe basic health problems perceived by the elders in elders' homes .A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted using an interviewer administered questionnaire. The Kandy municipal council area was selected where there were four elders' homes consisting of 172residential elders. The total population was selected excluding inmates below 60 years and those unable to communicate.

The mean age of the sample was 76 years. The female percentage was 58%. The majority was Sinhalese (88%), while 11.3% were Tamils. The unmarried percentage was 51%, while 32.7% were widowed. The percentage having children was 36%.One of the main health problems identified was the high prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Out of the diseases studied, 66.7% of the elders were diagnosed for at least one non communicable disease. Common diseases were hypertension (45%) and dyslipidemia (24%). 52% of the elders have not done diagnostic tests for dyslipidemia.The percentage who had age related disabilities was79.3%, and 58.8% out of them did not have the required equipment to overcome them. The percentage who had visitors at least once a year was 66.6% and 46.7%communicate with their families or friends by telephones. More than 95% of the elders were satisfied with food, bathing facilities, and emergency care provided by the institution. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases among the elders living in elders' homes in Kandy was high and diagnostic tests done were not adequate. There were 79.3% who had age related disabilities, while 58.8% of them did not have required facilities to overcome them. However, the most basic facilities provided to the elders were satisfactory.