

## **Impairment of basic activities of daily living of an elderly semi-urban population in Sri Lanka**

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Ageing of the population has become a major issue of concern in most South Asian countries. With the aging process, Basic Activities of Daily Living (BADL) seem to be compromised. Therefore, the present study focused on assessing the impairment of BADL of a selected group of elders.

A cross sectional study was conducted on a selected group of elders who attended the Geriatric Clinic at Kadugannawa Base Hospital. The study population contained 516 Sinhala speaking patients. The data was collected using a pre-designed, semi-structured questionnaire. Seven BADL were assessed including getting up from bed, brushing teeth, washing face, bathing, dressing, eating, and toileting.

Out of 516, 159 (30.8%) were males and 357 (69.2%) were females. 45.3% (234), 45.5% (235) and 9.1% (47) were in 60-69, 70-79 and 80-89 age groups respectively. 95.2% (491) were totally independent on all BADL whereas 4.8% (25) were dependent on one or more. Bathing and washing face were mostly dependent, where 14 (2.7%) of the respondents required assistance for each. Bathing (80%) was most difficult with the ageing process.

BADL impairments were observed in 4.8% of the study population. This lower prevalence could be due to the improvement of general health. Bathing and washing face were the mostly dependent BADL, which could be due to the high demand of physical exertion required by those activities. Bathing was mostly compromised with the ageing, which could be due to the chronic diseases encountered by the elderly that affect their physical energy. The present study concluded that most of the elders were independent on all the BADL while a minority required assistance. Most of the elders were in 60-69 and 70-79 age groups. Thus, the study should be extended to assess the BADL impairment in an advanced age group. We assessed elders who attended the clinic, but there can be elders who were more impaired in BADL within the community. Therefore, the study should be extended to the community, and also assess the Instrumental and Advanced Activities of Daily Living in the elderly population to have a better idea of ageing-related disability in Sri Lanka.

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