

Self-reported Health Problems of Institutionalized Elderly in Sri Lanka

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Ageing population is a major global phenomenon that reflects significant achievements in health, longevity and socio-economic development of many countries specially during the second half of 20th century. Sri Lanka is the first country which achieved demographic and health transition in South Asia and currently its share of elderly population is 13% of the total population. Even though the majority of elderly people in Sri Lanka are still cared by the family, a significant number of elderly are cared by institutions. However, there is a lack of knowledge on health problems faced by institutionalized elderly in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to identify the health problems of elderly living in institutions from self-reported health problems and functional difficulties such as Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) and Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). The study was based on quantitative data gathered from a survey conducted in selected elder homes in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The sample size was 400 elderly persons. Data were collected using an interviewer administered questionnaire containing questions on demographic and socio-economic background, self-reported health problems, ADLs and IADLs. Data were analysed using bivariate and association Chi-square. Findings revealed that majority of institutionalized elderly were in the age group 70-79 (41.0%) and predominance of women (61.0%). Over three fourths of elderly had at least one chronic disease. The ADLs and IADLs were associated with age, sex, marital status and previous employment of the elderly. The findings suggest that more health interventions should be given to institutionalized elderly focusing on different age cohorts of elderly, gender and socio-economic characteristics to address health problems and functional difficulties faced by institutionalized elderly in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Institutionalized elderly, Health issues of elderly, ADLs/IADLs elderly*