

HEALTH CARE PROBLEMS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE: A MEDICAL SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY FOCUSING ON THE THENMARADCHI DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT IN JAFFNA DISTRICT

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Abstract

As the aging population in Sri Lanka is growing rapidly and is a risk factor for geriatric diseases, the elderly people face increasing health care problems. Overall objective of this medical sociological study was to assess the health care problems of the elderly people living in the Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat division. A mixed method was employed in this community-based study. Questionnaire survey, key informant interviews and case study methods were used as the primary data. Based on the stratified random sampling technique 427 elderly people were selected for this study. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaire method was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods and chi-square tests with the usage of SPSS version 21. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically from the case study method and key informant interviews. The age range for the elderly was 60-98 years, with an average of 71.14 and deviation of 7.462. Most of the elderly (69.1%) had chronic diseases and among them, the vast majority of elderly (94.4%) received medical treatment for their diseases. Most elderly people (27%) suffered high blood pressure and 2.2% of the elderly people had kidney disease. Over majority of the elderly people (97%) did not get geriatric medical services for their health care problems. Socio demographic factors, particularly the sex ($p=0.047$) and education ($p<0.000$) have a statistically significant association between doctor-patient relationship at the government hospitals. As well as, the total monthly income of the family has a strong association with the life satisfaction ($p=0.006$) of the elderly people. The majority of elderly people (89.9%) felt they were full of energy. Most of the elderly people (82.4%) felt happy most of the time. More elderly people (79.4%) stated they used coping mechanisms to manage their health care related issues. The research concludes that the elderly people faced enormous health care related problems. This study strongly recommends that more health care and geriatric medical services should be provided to enhance the quality of life and well-being of the elderly people.

Keywords: *Elderly woman, Immunization, Non-communicable diseases, Quality of life, Well-being*