

ABSTRACT

Lack of research on to the patients' profile and patient values in ayurveda medical care in Sri Lanka, led to the design of this study.

Aim of the study was to identify demographic and socioeconomic factors of patients seeking ayurveda treatment, their disease patterns, satisfaction and perception on ayurveda medical care in Kalutara district.

According to the literature higher age, female sex, diseases such as arthritis, paralysis, fractures, cough and skin problems were in favour of seeking ayurveda medicine in Sri Lanka. Main reasons for visiting ayurveda practitioner were to achieve permanent cure and to avoid side effects of drugs used in allopathic medicine.

An institutional based descriptive cross sectional study design was employed. Eligible study units for three days from each center of randomly selected 16 registered private ayurveda practitioners were included. Interviewer administered structured questionnaire with both open and close ended questions was used to interview 395 subjects.

Seeking ayurveda medicines were high among age group of 60 years and above (50.9%), female sex (62.8%), Buddhists (95.5%) and respondents, gained family income of Rs:9999/= and less (71.1%).

Symptoms related to musculoskeletal diseases (35.7%), symptoms related to respiratory diseases (13.2%), paralysis (7.3%), wheezing (6.8%), headache (6.3%) and

fractures/dislocations (6.0%) were the main conditions presented to ayurveda practitioners.

Mean duration of presenting complaint was approximately 15.8 months.

Respondents had visited the ayurveda practitioner because they thought that the current illness would be best treated by ayurveda medicine (48.3%), and because expected cure could not be achieved with allopathic treatments (51.6%). Geographical proximity of the practitioner is not a major reason in seeking ayurveda practitioner (7.1%).

Patients' satisfaction on ayurveda medical care on the aspects of facilities available at the institution, waiting time (85.5%) and the cost spent for treatment (76.2%) were high whereas, their knowledge on availability of surgical procedures (14.8%) and family planning methods (3.5%) in ayurveda were poor. Majorities had perceived that the ayurveda medical care was less costly (66.8%) and less of side effects (87.4%). Greater part of the respondents had stated that the ayurveda medicine is better in treating fractures (83.1%), paralysis (78.6%) and asthma (64.6%) whereas allopathic medicine is better in treating dog bites (77.2%), heart attacks (74.8%), high blood pressure (78.3%), tuberculosis (76.8%) and leprosy (69.2%).

Study identified some patient values that may be used to improve both ayurveda and western medicine.