

## ABSTRACT

The demographic changes affect the socio-economic development of a country. The changes of age distribution of population, in the past few decades show increase in the proportion of elderly. This hospital based descriptive study was done, at the out patient department, Base hospital Nawalapitiya, to determine the health problems and socio-demographic characteristics of elders. The study declared the usual complaints of some common diseases and the socio-economic, demographic and behavioural factors of elderly patients. The existing family support for elders at the residence, accompanier for treatment and the chronic diseases of elderly patients were described.

The study was conducted among elderly patients in the 60-89 year age group. The time preferred for treatments at O.P.D. by most elderly patients were between 8.00- 9.49 am. Common presenting complaints were body ache and pain, fever, difficulty in breathing and abdominal pain. They were diagnosed as abnormal clinical findings, arthropathies, viral fever and respiratory tract diseases. The significant chronic diseases were hypertension, chronic respiratory tract diseases and diabetes mellitus. The result suggests that it is important to screen elders for chronic diseases. The promotion of elderly care at home is necessary for elders who 'stay alone'. The resources available with elders, for example, skills, knowledge, and properties can be used to uplift healthy life of them. Non-smoker and non-alcoholic are healthy than smoker and alcoholics.