

ABSTRACT

This descriptive cross sectional study was done to assess the service utilization pattern and services available for elderly care at the selected Hospitals in Kandy district in 2010. The study was done under four specific objectives.

The 1st specific objective of the study is to describe basic facilities for elderly care available at selected hospitals, 2nd objective is describe the morbidity pattern of the elders who are seeking in ward care in selected hospitals, the 3rd specific objective is assessing the knowledge and attitude on elderly care among selected hospital staff and the 4th objective is determining the factors affecting the utilization of in-ward health care by elderly.

In this study all teaching and base hospitals and 50% of divisional hospitals were included. Basic facilities for elderly care were assessed in all the index hospitals. For assessing the morbidity pattern of the elderly using a WHO standard check list, all BHTs of elderly patients who were treated in a particular hospital in a randomly selected month within last 12 month were selected and their final diagnosis were considered. To assess the knowledge and attitude among health staff, 422 health staff members were selected. Then using probability proportionate random sampling technique number of doctors and nurses were selected for the study from each hospital. To assess the factors affecting the utilization pattern also prevalence of satisfactory level is taken as 50%. Then the sample size was 422. Then by using population proportional sample technique number of subjects were selected in each hospital in a previous one month period. Data were analyzed by using SPSS computer package.

The study found that some of the basic facilities for in ward elderly patients were not satisfactory, especially in Divisional hospitals. The considered facilities were,

easy accessibility, availability of public transport facilities, less distance from closest station, easy entrance to hospital, easy pathway from OPD/ admission room to ward, ward plan, toilet facilities, eating area with good facilities and availability of sign boards.

Results regarding morbidity pattern of elders showed that NCD's are more prevalent among elders. The young old group suffered more from NCD's such as diabetes, hypertension, IHD, asthma and CVD's than older population.

When the knowledge and attitudes of the study sample was considered, majority of doctors and nurses had a satisfactory knowledge level and positive attitudes regarding elderly health care. Still there was a portion of staff with negative attitudes towards elderly health mainly in the Divisional hospitals and this should be an area of concern. Some intervention is needed to address this issue.

When the factors affecting utilization of in-ward care was analyzed the young old category of elders, low income status and low level of education were common reasons to increase admissions. Most of the admitted elders were suffering from some chronic illness and they felt that they were suffering more than others with the same illness. Majority of the sample were living with their children, but 1.5% were living alone. This is a group that needs attention from relevant authorities.