

Abstract

The objective of this study is to estimate the direct cost incurred by patients with a set of selected chronic non communicable diseases in seeking care from Divisional Hospital, Mihintale. The study extended to measure the compliance of patients for direct cost in relation to purchasing drugs/investigations done, from outside sources and the reason for the gap between levels of compliance.

A descriptive cross sectional hospital based study was conducted using a sample of 401 patients at hospital medical clinic. Data were collected using a pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire and in-depth study on purposively selected sample of 10 patients at household basis. Majority of the patients were female and the prominent age group was 50-59 years. Highest percentage of the patients included were from lowest income families. Diseases of the circulatory system were the commonest and the hypertension was the most reported disease for attending the clinic.

Average amount of direct cost (Rs.833) was relatively higher than the allowances received from the government. Among these expenses, cost incurred in outside investigations (36%), was substantial and second most expenditure (34%), was for the prescribed drugs. It was also revealed that more than half of the patients had purchased recommended prescriptions while less number least or none. Over 90 percent of the patients have shown highest compliance for outside investigations while 9.7 percent has shown zero compliance. The study found that major cause for the non compliance was poverty and unaffordability. It is suggested to establish the required laboratory facilities and to make available specific treatment at least for critical illnesses within the rural hospital and concurrently the government should take initiatives to address the poverty issues in the rural communities.