

## **Abstract**

### **Introduction**

Population aging is a universal phenomenon, but it appears particularly large for Sri Lanka. Population aging has many challenges in different aspects and its impact on health sector is enormous. Adapting the current health system to cater for an increasingly old population is becoming a serious and immediate requirement.

The main aim of this study was to assess the Geriatric care at Medical units of District General Hospital Matara.

### **Method**

Descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at medical units of District General Hospital Matara. Study was consisted of three components. First component was the description of the socio demographic characteristics and assessment of health care needs of elderly patients. Interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect the data from 422 elderly patients. Second component was the assessment of infrastructural facilities for elderly patients at medical units of DGH Matara. All medical units were taken to the study and check list was used to collect data. Third component was the assessment of knowledge and attitudes of medical officers and nursing officers towards Geriatric care at medical units of DGH Matara. Sample size was 108 and self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data.

## **Results**

Majority (56.0%, n = 232) of elders were belonged to young elderly group and 54.1% (n = 224) of elders were males. Among the elders 92.3% (n = 382) were unemployed and 50.3% (n = 208) had no income at all. 17.4% (n = 73) of elders had impaired ADL status and majority (75.4%, n = 314) of elders had impaired vision. Only 25.1% (n = 104) of elders had impaired hearing status. 81.6% (n = 358) of elders had at least one disease out of ten diseases studied. Out of five dimensions, “entrance to the ward”, “equipment availability” and “toilet & dining areas of the wards” were generally good in all units. But “floor plan” and “signboards” of the wards were not up to standards in all units. Majority (54.1%, n = 53) of health care workers had no training on elderly care. Among the health care workers, 74.5% (n = 73) had satisfactory knowledge and 72.4% (n = 71) had positive attitudes towards elderly care.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

ADL status, blindness, hearing status, urinary incontinence, dementia and depression level of elders was associate with their age. Knowledge and attitudes of health care workers was associate with their training on elderly care. Elders’ health care needs should address by public sector or any other mechanism with minimum out of pocket expenditure. Hospitals designs need improvements in elderly friendly manner and training opportunities on elderly care should provide to health care workers.

Key words: Geriatric care, health needs of elders, infrastructural facilities for elders, knowledge, attitudes