# 1 Abstract

## 1.1 Introduction

Since the first wave of deinstitutionalization, service utilization by patients with severe mental disorders has been a prominent issue in health and social policy. There are numerous studies in the Western societies assessing factors affecting service utilization.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Angoda, is the largest mental health facility in the country and the only institution that currently comes under the purview of the Mental Health Act. It receives about 500 admissions per month from all regions of the country and has approximately about 2000 in-patients at any given time. This apparent over-utilization of services in the NIHM has not been studied with reference to the factors known to influence service use and may not necessarily indicate improved care.

## 1.2 Aims

The aim of the study was to assess the socio demographic and clinical characteristics affecting service utilization at NIMH.

## 1.3 Methodology

A random sample of 253 patients admitted to NIMH during a period of one month was studied. An interviewer administered questioner was used to obtain socio demographic data and information of the past history. Case notes were used to obtain data on clinical characteristics. Descriptive statistics and correlational analyses were used to statistically analyse the data.

## 1.4 Results

There was no statistically significant association between socio demographic factors (age, marital status , socio economic status, education, geographical factors, etc.) and the service utilization. There was no statistically significant association between clinical characteristics, treatment factors or service utilization. But ECT was a factor which significantly affected the length of stay and this association was found to be statistically significant.

## 1.5 Conclusions

Most of the service users at NIMH were from Western province. Few other factors like severity of mental illness, past treatment experiences and beliefs of the carers also seem to affect the choice of NIMH.