



## **Non-communicable Diseases: A Major Challenge to Indigenous Medical Practitioners in Sri Lanka**

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Indigenous Systems of Medicine (Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha) have been continuously rendering health care service in Sri Lanka. During the past few decades there has been increasing public interest in these systems of medicine in because they have incorporated different modes of treatments effectively to prevent & treat diseases especially Non-communicable diseases (NCD's) & their complications, & maintaining the general health.

In this modern word, rapid urbanization, lifestyle modifications, demanding and stressful employment, sedentary lifestyle and bad behaviours such as smoking, unhealthy diet increase the risk of many NCD's. Meanwhile, an epidemiologic transition has now shifted the disease pattern from Communicable diseases to NCD's in Sri Lanka, which now contributes to nearly 90 % of the disease burden of the country. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a non-infectious medical conditions of long duration and generally slow progression, and thus they require medical management for a longer period. As a result, NCD's has become one major health challenges and a leading contributor of mortality and health related disability and costs.

In this modern society, there are so many diseases particularly NCD's with no permanent cure due to lack of proper curative approach or systematized mode of treatment for them and thus they end up with disabilities. However, some of these disabilities can be effectively prevented or permanently cured by Indigenous Systems of Medicine. The major NCDs that are currently causing disabilities and posing challenges to Indigenous Medical Practitioners (IMP) are Stroke a major disease condition in Government Ayurveda Hospitals, Diabetes a major disease condition in private Ayurveda Medical Practice, Chronic Kidney Diseases are burning problem in North-central province of Sri Lanka and Cancer is becoming threatening condition in Sri Lanka These NCD's are creating significant new pressures on health care systems and the current health systems have failed to address them properly. Therefore, NCD's pose a major challenge to the Indigenous Medical Practitioners (IMPs) as its recovery is very slow process and in most cases if it is not treated properly it can cause severe physical and mental disabilities.

Sri Lanka has wealth of traditional medicinal plants but still essential medicines for NCD's are limited and thus due consideration should be given to discover & develop essential single as well as compound medicines. IMPs should be competent to employ all modes Regimenal therapy effectively & oriented with recent developments of Regimenal therapy so as to apply them to optimize the potential of the patients to quick recovery & maintain health. IMPs should be trained counselors to proper counseling as NCDs cause deterioration in the quality of life as well as psychological problems such as depression where patients continue to live with chronic disabilities while depending on others for a long time. Therefore combined effort of new approach is needed to provide "a rationale & justification" for the introduction of change in the medical practice so far followed & bring recognition & successful result in the prevention & management of NCD's