

## **A Study of factors influencing the admission to the home for elders at kaithady**

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### **Introduction**

Aging, the unavoidable event occurring in every one's life, starts from birth. There are physical, mental and social changes occurring with the aging. There is no cut off point for aging and it varies from individual to individual and country to country. But majority of people accept that 65 years would be the dividing line between middle age and old age.

The Srilanka population aged 60 years and older will increase to 18 percent by the year 2020 and to 27 percent by 2040. In Jaffna peninsula, 11.8 percent (69,000 in number) were above 60 years of age according to the report of Government agent of Jaffna in 1997. This increase of elders' population would affect the national economy, health status and development of the country. Therefore we need to find out the problems of elders, with their consequences in the development, with possible solutions.

This study was aimed at identifying the main reasons for the admission to the home for elders and also to describe the socio-economic factors, family background, psychological aspects and health status of the elders admitted to the home for elders at Kaithady. There were 192 elders, among them 105 were males and 87 were females.

### **Methods**

Our study was a descriptive cross sectional study looking into the factors influencing the admission of elders to Home for elders at Kaithady. These data were collected with the aid of an interviewer administered questionnaire.

### **Results**

The results showed that about 92% of the admissions were from Jaffna district and half (53.4%) of them were from Valikamam. One third of the elders (36%) belonged to the age group of 71-80 years. Males and females were about equal in percentage. When the marital status was looked into, 43% were widow/widower and 28.8% were single (never married). Half of the elders were unemployed and 25% did unskilled job during their life. Their educational level was also very poor, 90% of the elders did not have any income and 7.3% had incomes less than 1000 rupees per month. More than three quarters of the elders did their daily activities themselves. This was because of the admission criteria for elders home which admitted elders who were independent in their activities of daily living. When the health was considered, 16.6% of elders had psychiatric illnesses, 16% had hypertension, 14.7% had asthma, 13% had diabetes, 5.5% had arthritis, 9.8% were having visual impairment and 1.8% (3 elders) were having ischemic heart disease. Most of the elders were having a good overall satisfaction regarding the elders' home. 88% of elders were satisfied with their family life and 11.7% were having poor satisfaction. 78.5% were satisfied with the old age and 21.5% having poor satisfaction related to old age.

### **Conclusion**

Being single was the commonest reason which accounts to 41.7%, for admission to the elderly home, children's inability to look after their parents accounts to 17.8% while childlessness accounts for 7.4% of the admissions to this elderly home.

### **The main recommendations are**

1. The families where elders are present should be supported financially through government and non government organizations.
2. It is preferable to change the admission criteria of elders' home to admit the elders with limited activities of daily living.