



***PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS ON PUBLIC SECTOR HEALTH CARE
DELIVERY SYSTEM OF SRI LANKA: A REFLECTION FROM A
SUBURB OF WESTERN PROVINCE***

K.A.S. Keeragala, M.A.S.C.Samarakoon, A.I. Jagoda
Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka

The study addresses an important research question on how best the health care system in Sri Lanka can be reformed with reference to the actual need of the general public of the country. Main objective of the study was to identify public perception of health care they received by the government system.

A survey instrument on service seekers along with a focus group discussion with policy makers were utilized for collecting data. The questionnaire survey sample employed for data collection and the study location is identified as Piliyandala (Kesbawa) Divisional secretariat division in Colombo District in the Western Province.

The sample selection method was based on multi stage random sampling method. The survey was carried out among 73 Grama Niladhari areas in the Piliyandala Divisional Secretariat Division including a total sample of 438 households. From each Grama Niladhari area, six households were selected by random sampling. The age of the study sample was 18 – 60 years and both males and females participated in the study. The education level varied from ordinary level to postgraduate level.

Majority of the patients choose Government Hospitals for medical treatment mainly due to the ability to choose a doctor and the ability to get treatment at any time. Patients prefer Government Hospitals than Private Sector Hospitals due to the ability to obtain drugs, polite service of the staff and maintenance of confidentiality.

According to the responses received, service seekers believe that the main issue with the government health institutions is that they are overcrowded. Whereas non-availability of drugs is the second major issue, quality issues, safety issues and non availability of investigation also matters in a considerable percentage.

Nearly 75% of the people prefer to have a health insurance scheme. Very few agreed to charging the full cost while one third agreed for charging the cost partially from the patient. The study results reported fairly high level of trust in their Health Care Provider, hospitals. It confirms that there is a considerable amount of public confidence regarding Sri Lankan health care.

Trust is crucial in medical settings. The study report describes an increase in trust in Public Health Care System in Sri Lanka. In addition, health care improvement via public private partnership and introduction of a user fee for health care should be considered.