

Abstract

Background:

Global disease burden estimates often lack real data on morbidities, especially from patients treated in Outpatient Department (OPD). In Sri Lanka, around 40 million visits are made annually to the OPDs in government hospitals and we conducted a preliminary study to assess the morbidity profile of these OPD patients.

Methods:

Patients attending the OPD, in teaching hospital Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, was recruited into the study using systematic random sampling procedure. A self-administered, structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Investigators explained the study to patients and data collection was completed before seeing the physician. Self-reported presenting complain was used to analyze the morbidity profile of the patients.

Results:

The study sample consisted of 1 439 patients (male - 515, female - 924). The mean age of the study sample was 40 years (SD = 19 years). The mean age of the females were statistically significantly higher than that of the males ($t = 4.03$, $P < 0.001$). Housewives constituted the major occupational group (52%) followed by students (15.9%). The most common presenting complains reported were body aches and pains (15.6%), cough and cold (10.5%), and abdominal pain (8.5%). Leading cause of hospital visit among different demographic categories showed statistically significant variations.

Conclusions:

The morbidity pattern observed in this patient population was not previously reported. OPD surveillance should be established to understand the changing pattern of minor ailments which might have a huge impact on health of the public.

Keywords: Outpatient department, morbidity profile, Sri Lanka