

QoL. All domain scores were transformed to present on a scale from 0-100.

Results: The response rate was 97.8%. (n=3,5673). The majority was females (n=2,130, 59.6%) and the mean age was 66.7 (SD=4.3) years. 75.8% (n=2,710) had at least one diagnosed chronic disease. The highest mean score of the QoL was reported for the functional domain (63.4, SD=16.9), whereas the physical domain had the lowest (52.9, SD=15.0). The mean scores (SD) for the spiritual, psychological, environmental and social domains were 61.3 (15.9), 60.0 (16.4), 59.5 (16.3) and 57.5 (13.1) respectively. Statistically significant higher mean scores were observed in males than in females for physical, psychological and social domains (p<0.001). Mean scores for all six domains were higher in elderly who did not have any diagnosed chronic disease than their counterparts (p<0.001).

Conclusions: This large community-based study has revealed that QoL in rural elderly is relatively high. Males and those who did not have chronic diseases were found to have higher QoL.

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Balance, Hand Grip Strength and Risk of Falling in Children with Visual Impairment

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Introduction and Objectives: Vision plays an important role in maintaining balance in human body. Lack of visual information could change the muscle properties causing a reduction in the hand grip strength. Impaired balance and handgrip strength may cause higher risk of falls. Objective of this study was to compare the balance, hand grip strength and risk of falling between children with visual impairments and sighted children.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in children with visual impairments (n=45, aged 11-18 years) from Deaf and Blind School, Rathmalana and sighted children (n=45, 11-18 years aged) from Moratuwa Maha Vidyalaya. Balance subtest of Bruininks-Oseretsky Test (BOT)-2nd edition was used to assess balance. Jamar hand-held dynamometer was used to measure hand grip strength (unit-kg) and a validated questionnaire was used to assess risk of falling. Visual acuity was measured by using a Snellan chart.

Results: Visually impaired children (visual acuity- 12/6-0) had significantly lower mean score of BOT-2 balance subtest (21.58±6.87) than sighted children (31.07±2.07-p<0.001). Significantly lower handgrip strength of both hands were noted in visually impaired children (13.63 ± 4.41 kg, 14.66 ± 5.85 kg) compared to the sighted children (24.23 ± 11.12 kg, 29.91 ± 8.71 kg in left and right hands respectively- p<0.001). Children with visual impairments had a significant higher risk of falling than sighted children (1.36±1.09 and 0.38±0.54 respectively, p<0.001).

Conclusion: Impaired balance, hand grip strength and increased risk of falling were observed in visually impaired children. Introducing balance and physical fitness training programs would be beneficial for children with visual impairments.

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Childhood Asthma and its Association with Selected Obstetric and Neonatal Factors among Children Aged 3 -10 Years in Tertiary Care Hospitals in Colombo District

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Introduction and Objectives: Childhood asthma is associated with significant morbidity and economic cost. This study aims to determine the proportion of childhood asthma and its association with selected obstetric and neonatal factors in children aged 3-10 years in tertiary care hospitals in Colombo district.

Methods: A Cross sectional analytical study was conducted on a consecutive sample of 266 children aged 3-10 presenting to pediatric clinics and wards of Colombo South Teaching Hospital, Kalubowila and Lady Ridgeway Hospital, Colombo, over a period of 6 months. Interviewer administered questionnaire was used to assess the socio-demographic, neonatal and obstetric factors related to asthma, its onset, severity and control. Chi square test and two sample t test were used to assess the significance and p value of < 0.05 was taken as significant.