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Healthcare related behaviour among residents of a selected Medical Officer of Health area

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Introduction & Objectives:

Factors that influence ones' decision, with regard to healthcare related behaviours are yet to be studied thoroughly in the Sri Lankan context. The objective of this study was to explore the impact of socio-demographic and relevant factors on the healthcare related behaviour of residents of a selected semi-urban Medical Officer of Health area.

Methods:

A descriptive cross-sectional study design with a multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 422 respondents from a MOH area. Data was collected using interviewer-administered questionnaires. Chi square tests identified associations between categories, whereas descriptive data was presented as numbers and percentages.

Results:

Most respondents were chief occupants (51.2%), males (50.7%), Sinhalese (97.6%), Buddhists (87%), aged 41 to 50 years (21.1%), earning between Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 44,999 monthly (25.4%) and educated up to the GCE A/L (35.8%). Perception of health had statistically significant associations with sex ($p=0.027$), age ($p<0.001$) and education level of the respondents ($p<0.001$). Illness not responding to self-medication (57.3%) and affecting daily activities (60.2%) were main reasons for respondents to seek treatment. Preferred healthcare system had statistically significant associations with age ($p<0.001$), education level ($p<0.001$), monthly income of the respondents ($p<0.001$) and also depended on the illness, with most seeking ayurvedic care (47.6%) for fractures. Selection of the healthcare provider depended on affordability (72.7%), availability (79.8%), and accessibility (71.3%).

Conclusion:

Healthcare related behaviour is a compilation of decision-making processes governed by factors ranging from a person's sociodemographic characteristics to attributes of healthcare providers.