

THE PATTERN OF ADMISSIONS TO A UNIVERSITY MEDICAL UNIT

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The Teaching Hospital at Jaffna functions as the sole General Hospital catering to a population of over 1 million. The admissions to the University Medical Unit were analysed over a 3 month period to help formulate a scheme to strengthen the Health Services of the region and to design a protocol to improve the delivery of health care and the teaching programme of the Unit.

There were 445 admissions to the Unit (mean : 4.8 admissions/day). The male : female ratio was 1 : 7 : 1. The ages ranged from 12 to 84 years. The Geriatric patients (over 60 years) numbered 76 (17%). 115 (26%) of the admissions were unwarranted and could have been managed either at home, at the local hospital or at the medical clinic. 186 (42%) patients were from within the Municipal limits and another 51 (11%) from within a distance of 5 miles from the hospital. 80 (18%) came from places over 20 miles away, many of them bypassing treatment from local hospitals. Only 53 (12%) were referred to the hospital by a medical officer—the majority presenting themselves directly at the Out-patients Department. The mean duration of stay in hospital was 6.3 days (range 1-29). There was no difference in the duration of stay of males (6.3 days) and females (6.2 days).

This study identifies factors that need consideration in improving the efficacy of Teaching Units and, in general, in the reorganization of regional health services.