

PROFILE OF PATIENTS ATTENDING THE  
OUT PATIENTS' DEPARTMENT OF A GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL

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The National Health Services, in any country, is a national asset of immeasurable value. Provision of health care for all in need, is only a fundamental human right. Though the policies of the Departments of Health in the developing countries had been to maintain an equilibrium in the distribution of medical care facilities throughout the country, the actual practice has perpetuated inequality, thus allowing most of the facilities to be concentrated in selected metropolitan centres.

In Sri Lanka, there were 46,005 hospital beds in 1986, which amounted to a ratio of 2.9 hospital beds per 1000 population. Though a fair decentralisation of health care facilities is effected in its infrastructural set-up, the patients still perceive the General Hospital Colombo to be 'the ideal hospital'.

The study mainly focusses on the perennial problem of patients by - passing all the smaller institutions and trying to seek treatment at the General Hospital, Colombo, even for minor ailments. It also identifies different categories of patients - using the variables, age, socio-economic status, standard of education and type of ailment, who patronise this institution.

These findings are being further compared with a control group - a group of patients attending the Out Patients' Department of the Government Ayurveda Hospital, Colombo.