

**Study of the physical characteristics and nutritional status of new entrants to the University of Colombo.**

**MD (Community Medicine) - 1982**

**D 18**

This study was undertaken with the object of obtaining valid data on bio-physical characteristics of a university population at entry, and relate these findings to their nutritional status. The survey included the collection of data related to their socio-economic background and the determination of the prevalence of defects and abnormalities of organ systems. The most common clinical signs were dental caries, goitre and pallor. Caries was uniformly distributed in the population, goitre was related to area of residence. The anthropometric parameters of height: weight and weight: height ratio were low compared to data available from developed countries. The medical students, a high proportion of whom were from 'urban' areas and from a higher socio-economic background, had better anthropometric parameters than students from the other faculties, the worse affected being the arts students. There was a high prevalence rate of anaemia, dental caries and goitre among the study population. Preventive measures should be adopted to reduce the incidence of anaemia.