

Awareness of IT-based Outbound Services (ITBOSs) provided by the Sri Lankan health sector

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Globally, health the sector has invested heavily in IT-based Health Services including ITBOSs. The Sri Lankan health sector also has introduced many ITBOSs, but observations proved that many would-be users are not aware of them. The objectives of this study were to 1) Identify the ITBOSs provided in Sri Lanka and 2) Identify the awareness of the public about them. To achieve the first objective, four public and four private organizations plus two web-based health service providers were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Out of the ten organizations identified to satisfy objective one, two government and four private hospitals were selected eliminating the others, which are not visited by patients directly in order to accomplish the second objective. Although the private hospitals selected had several branches, only the Colombo City branch was selected due to time and resource limitations. 600 individuals were selected using the convenient sampling method, to gather data using a self-administered, structured questionnaire. A major limitation of the survey was the lack of time and resources to conduct a comprehensive survey covering more health service providers and would-be users. Respondents consisted of 70% males, 30% females, and 54% in the age group of 35-50 years while 38% are between 20-34 years and 8% are between of age 51-65 years. It was established that nine ITBOSs exist: Web-based online and Mobile App-based Doctor Channeling, Tele Doctor, Ongoing appointment number service, Medicine to doorstep, Health Care to doorstep, Health Records portal, Online Lab Report service, and Suwasariya ambulance service. 100% of the respondents are aware of Suwasariya and 73% are aware of the Web-Based Online Doctor Channeling; however, only less than 48% are aware of the other services. The respondents in the age group 20-35 have the maximum awareness, while those between 51-65 years of age have the least awareness of the services. The launch of a mass scale promotion campaign by the service providers using all media to promote these services among the Sri Lankan public is recommended.

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