

## Status of long-term care of aged people in elders' homes in Sri Lanka

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As Sri Lanka's population is ageing rapidly, an increasing number of older people will gradually enter the 80-and-above age category. Although the family care of elderly people is regarded as a culturally accepted way of caring for elders, currently there is an emerging demand for institutional care for elders. Unlike in the family setting, the institutionalized elderly have greater difficulties in performing their daily activities. This study examines the status of long-term care of aged people in elders' homes with regard to cognitive and physical impairment as observed through health records and self-health reporting. The study is based on the information collected from eight elders' homes covering three districts—Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara. The study adopted a mixed method approach with the use of a semi-structured survey of 150 elderly people who need long-term care, as well as six in-depth interviews and three focus-group discussions. Functional disability is seen commonly in older adults. Physical impairment is associated with underlying medical conditions as well as with external factors such as social and financial support and the environment. Investigation into cognitive impairment revealed that it is higher among the older adults who barely receive required mental support. Approximately three percent of the sampled elderly had a mental disability. A lower rate of mental disability is due to the fact that the majority of the elderly people surveyed are still below the age of 75. Major issues encountered by institutionalized elders include lack of basic facilities, shortage of workers, and unhygienic conditions, as well as a lack of, or no support received from their families.

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