



UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO
SRI LANKA



PROCEEDINGS

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM - 2024
DEPARTMENT OF DEMOGRAPHY

POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

13th DECEMBER 2024

DEPARTMENT OF DEMOGRAPHY
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

Time	Health and Well-being for All: Mortality, Morbidity, Ageing, and Elderly Care
IST	Morning Session – 2
11.30 a.m.– 1.00 p.m.	Venue – Hall No. 38, Department of Demography
	Session Chair – Prof. Chandani Liyanage
	Session Coordinator – Imasha Dissanayaka
11.30 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.	Increasing Elderly Population of Sri Lanka: The Impact on Health Security <i>H. M. T. J. Abhayapala</i>
11.40 a.m. – 11.50 a.m.	Challenges Faced by Young Tamil Women in Jaffna Peninsula in Decision Making on Higher Education <i>E. M. S. Ekanayake, W. S. N. Siriwardhana, K. P. G. C. Kumari, and S. Amirthalingam</i>
11.50 a.m. – 12.00 noon	The Burden of Respiratory Diseases among African Child Population: A Medical Geography Perspective <i>M. H. P. Hasna and F. Ruzaik</i>
12.00 noon – 12.10 p.m.	Economic Implications of Senile Dementia in an Ageing Population: A Global Perspective <i>D. A. T. S. Shavinda</i>
12.10 p.m.– 12.20 p.m.	Impact of the Economic Crisis on Maternal Nutritional Status – A Study Based on Homagama Medical Officer of Health (MOH) Area <i>W. P. N. L. Sumathipala</i>
12.20 p.m.– 1.00 p.m.	Discussion

The Burden of Respiratory Diseases among African Child Population: A Medical Geography Perspective

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Acute respiratory infections (ARIs) significantly contribute to child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in East and Southern Africa, where the burden is disproportionately high. Around 45 million children in these regions are affected by respiratory conditions. Pneumonia alone causes 16% of deaths in children under five, contributing to over 920,000 deaths globally in 2015. In 2019, the under-five mortality rate in Africa was 73 per 1,000 live births, nearly eight times higher than in Europe. Air pollution, especially household air pollution (HAP), is a leading cause, with 352 million children exposed. More than 50% of pneumonia-related deaths in children under five are linked to HAP. In Ethiopia, respiratory diseases affect 22% of children aged 12 to 23 months, with a mortality rate of 88 deaths per 1,000 live births. The incidence of tuberculosis is rising in Eastern and Southern Africa, alongside chronic diseases like asthma, which affects 64.9 million children under 15. Diseases such as tuberculosis, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) exacerbate the situation. This research investigates the prevalence and impact of respiratory diseases on children in Africa using secondary data from research articles and the World Bank, UNICEF, and WHO websites. Qualitative data were analysed to identify geographic and socio-environmental factors contributing to the high prevalence of respiratory diseases. These factors include air pollution, poor living conditions, urbanisation, environmental pollutants, inadequate healthcare, and poor nutrition. Climate change, water scarcity, and HIV vulnerability further complicate efforts, requiring intervention. This research addresses the question: What geographic and socio-environmental factors contribute to the high prevalence of respiratory diseases among children in Africa, and what interventions can mitigate these impacts? In conclusion, addressing the burden of respiratory diseases requires a region-specific approach. Interventions should focus on improving environmental health, vaccination, breastfeeding, nutrition, and reducing smoking. These strategies align with the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which aims at reduce child mortality and ensuring well-being by 2030.

Keywords: child population, medical geography perspective, mortality, respiratory diseases, socio-environmental factors