

Survey on the prevalence of back pain, its related disability and common treatment methods used by back pain victims at Thimbirigasyaya Secretarial Division

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Introduction

Back pain is one of the commonest musculoskeletal conditions posing a major burden on individuals and the health care system in Sri Lanka. No studies have documented the prevalence of back pain and its related disability in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

To describe the prevalence of back pain and its related disability in relation to gender and age and describe the common treatment methods used by back pain victims in the Thimbirigasyaya Secretarial Division.

Methods

A community based cross-sectional house-hold survey was carried out at the Thimbirigasyaya Secretarial Division in the Western Province. A pre-tested simple questionnaire was administered to 11396 adults (55.2% females and 44.8% males) in the age group of 30–60 years.

Subjects who were found to have back pain were provided with the Modified Oswestry Low Back Pain Disability Questionnaire. Disability was graded according to Modified Oswestry Low Back Pain Disability Inventory as mild disability, moderate disability and severe disability.

Results

The response rate was 93.9%. The point prevalence of back pain was 23.2% while among the study population 24.5% had experienced it at least once during the past year. Of those with back pain at the time of survey, 26% had mild disability, 63.5% had moderate disability and 8.9% had severe disability. Point prevalence in relation to gender was 13.57% in females and 9.58% in males. According to age categorization peak point prevalence was shown in 40 – 49y of age. Back pain victims had used different treatment methods. A majority of the study population (42.1%) had sought Western Medicine and 9.6% Ayurveda medicine. Of the participants with back pain, 34.7% had not sought any type of treatments.

Conclusions

Back pain has affected over one fifth of the population surveyed. Of the population with back pain at the time of the survey, 63.5% were moderately disabled.