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## Emerging needs of long-term care for elderly parents residing with adult children

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### Introduction

This study mainly focuses on the long-term care needs, especially of the elderly parents who reside with their adult children. Since majority of elders are still living with their adult children, there is an emerging need for long term care at the place of residence of the elderly and how children take care of such needs. With the changes observed in demographic trends, an ageing population has become a common phenomenon that can be identified in many countries including Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka's population ages rapidly, more personal care and health support services will be needed for people who can become disabled as a consequence of ageing and hence require assistance to function independently. Therefore, long term-care (LTC) is a topic that plays an important role in managing the demands and requirements of an increasing ageing population. According to WHO World Report 2015 on Ageing and Health, LTC is defined as:

The activities undertaken by others to ensure that people with or at risk of a significant ongoing loss of intrinsic capacity can maintain a level of functional ability consistent with their basic rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity (WHO, 2015).

This clearly shows that the long-term care issues are emerging with the deterioration of health with ailments as age advances. It is common that the people encounter different health issues when they become older. It has been shown that elders who are in the oldest age group require more long-term care than other age groups of elderly (DCS, 2014). Currently, Sri Lanka has 7.6 % of young old, 3.4 % of old old and 1.4 % of oldest old population. The current young old population will also reach the oldest age group in 5-10 years; thereby adding more significance to long-term care issues.

However, there is a changing patterns of care giving and families need a proper plan to look after elderly parents without denying the-needs of other immediate family members. When elderly people need long-term care and their health problems make it difficult or impossible for them to perform the basic activities of daily life (Weeratunga, 2015) they need more care from their own family members. In this context, Sri Lanka needs to pay considerable attention for long-term care of its elderly population. The main objective of this study is to examine the emerging needs of long-term care for elderly parents who reside with their adult children. This

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living arrangement is a special category of interest because the study will attempt to find how adult children take care of their elderly parents' long-term care needs without disturbing their own family affairs. Specific objectives are to examine the characteristics of elderly parents who need long term care; and issues faced by elderly parents and adult children in the context of needing and providing long-term care respectively.

### **Methodology**

This study is based on information collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through case study methodology while secondary data were collected through Department of Census and Statistics and available literature relevant to Sri Lankan context of long-term care. The qualitative investigation covered three districts: Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara. Fifteen elderly parents who reside with their adult children and fifteen care providing children were selected as the sample study. They were conducted with those cases so altogether we conducted 30 cases. During regular visits to these selected homes, discussions were held at their leisure, allowing elderly men and women to talk freely, narrating their personal stories with occasional interruptions to probe into certain areas of importance for the study. The assistance from identified care taker is taken for the elders those who could not give their views properly. Data analysis was done with the use of thematic analysis.

### **Results and discussion**

This study showed 60% of the cases had physical and mental ailments. However, it was found that most of them started mental ailments as a result of physical disabilities, caring issues and especially with uncomfortable feelings of bothering their care takers too much as majority of them were family members. However, few cases mentioned that it is a responsibility of family members to take care of them during their difficult period of life course as they have done their maximum for their children. While half of the cases were satisfied with long-term care assistance, other half was not satisfied at all. Main complaints were not receiving care for the actual needs they have, care taker cannot understand their needs properly, and they do not have enough time to be with them etc. The difficulties faced by caretakers include facing several issues such as other involvement in the house, lack of proper understanding about how to take care of an elderly person, no positive comments received for what they do, mental stress, not enough rest, not enough finances and most importantly no support from other family members. In order to overcome the issues emerging as a result of long term care assistance, it is essential to provide proper awareness for people using life cycle approach, develop support mechanisms to care takers and elders who need long term care and prepare a supportive environment within the family.

### **Conclusion**

Long-term care for older Sri Lankans is emerging with the rapid ageing process. As majority of elders are still living with their adult children, family members have responsibility to look after them but with great difficulty because of their own family issues. Adult children as family care takers of elderly parents face several issues regarding long-term care, especially with the age related long-term care of their parents. It was also found that adult children are not in a position to provide required care as they have not been trained or made them aware how long-term care issues of the elderly can be handled with some serious attention. In this context, it is important for the government to carry out an awareness campaign among households which have both adult children and elderly parents live together to train the adult children of handling long-term care issues at household level with limited resources available to them

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