

Dengue: The Cost of Illness

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Dengue is a viral infection transmitted through the bite of infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. It is an endemic in Sri Lanka especially in urban and suburban settings with higher transmission rates happening during the rainy season. Even though the dengue epidemic has been devastating, its consequences for the people and economy have received a little attention from economists. The economic burden of the dengue disease has many aspects. First, it affects the public budget as the government urged to allocate extra resources to treat dengue patients as well as to control the spreading of the disease. Second, it affects the individual and household budget since they have to face an unexpected expenditure for their treatments. Thirdly, getting illness reduces the number of working days of the people and therefore the overall productivity of the economy. Therefore, this study intends to identify the economic cost of dengue disease in Sri Lanka by taking a sample of 117 dengue affected people in the year 2016. The sample was selected from Maharagama division in Colombo district which is one of the high density Dengue reporting area. The selection of the sample units was on judgment base according to the prevalence data within the year. The study estimated three kinds of costs; direct medical cost, indirect cost, and other costs involved in Dengue disease. Direct medical costs include the cost associated with hospitals, doctors, nurses, use of equipment, laboratory services, prescriptions, and so on. A shadow price method was used to estimate the indirect cost which is their forgone productivity. The other costs include the extra cost bared by the patients and their families due to the illness; such as food, travelling, caring, and so on. The study found that the total cost of prevalence of dengue disease per person is approximately 74000 rupees on average while 74% of this accounts from direct medical cost, 16% from the loss of productivity and 10% from other.

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