

The impact of the economic crisis on patient attendance at Pediatric Clinic of Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Teaching Hospital - Yakkala

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Sudden economic crisis followed by Covid-19 pandemic has affected almost all population while increasing the cost of basic and secondary needs. The Pediatric clinic of Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Teaching Hospital - Yakkala (GWATH) could be identified as a leading clinic amongst Ayurveda and Western Pediatric clinics which serves in the management of a considerable population of pediatric diseases. Main objective of this study was to observe the prevalence of pediatric diseases during crisis situation based on patient attendance at pediatric clinic of GWATH. The secondary objectives were to identify which pediatric disease conditions have become more prominent during the crisis situation in Sri Lanka. Data was collected from the patients' record book of Pediatric clinic, GWATH from January 2018 to July 2022. Percentages of patients' attendance on each diagnosis with respect to the total patient count with respect to 2018 were compared to determine the prevalence of each disease. Based on the mean values (MV) of the patient count in each year, the total patient attendance was compared. The calculated MV of the total patient count in each year from 2018 to July 2022 (2018MV-26.7, 2019MV-28.8, 2020MV-12.0, 2021MV-7.7 and 2022MV-15.3) showed that the attendance of patients to the clinic has been decreased after the crisis situation compared with pre-crisis in 2018. Considering the total number of patients attended the clinic, it was identified that the prevalence of Ratha roga, Skin disease, Developmental delay and Immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) have been increased compared to pre-crisis situation even though the total attendance has been reduced. In 2018, the prevalence of above-mentioned diseases was 4.6%, 3.3%, 6.2% and 0.0% respectively. And in the year 2022 by month of July it has been 7.6%, 7.3%, 11.6% and 5.8% respectively. ITP has become the most obvious disease condition from all the pediatric disease diagnosis. More than 80% of disease diagnosis is based on non-communicable diseases (NCD). With the increase of the patient count in 2022 compared to 2020 and 2021 it is interpreted that nevertheless the economic crisis or the pandemic, people are willing to attend the clinic for their major health conditions in seeking Ayurveda treatments. ITP has become a novel major pediatric complication compared with 2018 which makes it obvious that people are seeking Ayurveda treatments for NCDs rather than CDs.

Keywords: Crisis situation, Covid-19 pandemic, NCDs, ITP, Ratha roga

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