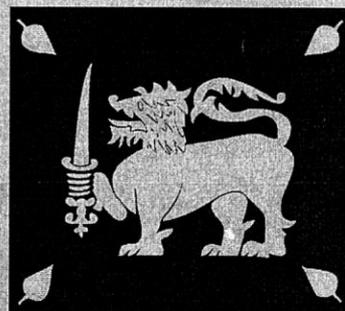


PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS (PRIMASYS)

Case study from Sri Lanka



Abridged Version



Alliance for
Health Policy and
Systems Research



World Health
Organization

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Overview

Sri Lanka is an island located in the Indian Ocean, with a midyear population for 2016 estimated at 22.235 million inhabitants. It is situated a few degrees north of the equator, with a land area of 65 525 square kilometres, a length of 432 kilometres and a width of 224 kilometres. The gross national income per capita is US\$ 3836 according to Central Bank Data 2015. In 2013, total health expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) was 3.24% and expenditure on public sector primary care hospitals was 6.4% of current health expenditure, according to National Health Accounts. The country has a tropical climate and is susceptible to frequent rains, floods and landslides, which increases the burden of respiratory illnesses, vector-borne diseases and injuries. Sri Lanka's health profile is dominated by noncommunicable diseases, and major causes of hospital deaths are ischaemic heart disease, neoplasms, zoonotic

and other bacterial diseases, pulmonary heart disease and diseases of the pulmonary circulation and cerebrovascular diseases.¹

This health profile demands, from the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, a new comprehensive, people-centred and continuous system of health care delivery.² Sri Lanka has a pluralistic health system, composed of modern allopathic and traditional ayurveda systems of health provision. The allopathic system, the main provider, comprises of public and private sectors. The public sector services are available islandwide, while private sector provision is based on market demand. Free access to health care is a priority of the Government of Sri Lanka, which has been committed to maintaining this policy.

Table 1 presents key demographic, macroeconomic and health data for Sri Lanka.

1 Annual Health Bulletin 2014. Medical Statistics Unit, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka; 2014 (<http://www.health.gov.lk/enWeb/publication/AHB2014/AHB2014.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2017). (<http://203.94.76.60/AHB2003/Chapter%201.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2017)..

2 Primary healthcare reforms in Sri Lanka: aiming at preserving universal access to health, 10th chapter in the poster book Health for all, the journey of Universal Health Coverage, 2014, (c) center for global health histories, university of York, ISBN 978 81 250.