

## **Changes in the Population Structure and its Impact on Health Care System in Sri Lanka**

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Sri Lanka's demographic transition compared to other developing countries has been very rapid and now the country has reached the last stage of its population transition characterised by the trend of having an increasing top heavy population pyramid. Starting from the late 1940s to the 1980s the country was grappling with the heavy child dependency. In this period, the country's health care system too was geared more towards the caring of mothers and children in almost all the aspects, and this trend is still continuing irrespective of the rapid changes taken place in the country's population structure more towards having an increasing percentage of elderly persons in the population leading to increased prevalence of chronic diseases and disability. In this changeover, an urgent need has arisen to gear the health care system to cover the care of enormously increasing the aged. Apart from demographic transition, other important phenomena such as rapidly increasing prices of medicine, equipment and consultation in an environment of speedily breaking down of traditional family system, lack of institutional facilities for caring elders, increasing unequal distribution of income, and not having a social security system spread enough to cover the aged warrant paying special attention to the health care of the aged.

**Key words:** Population structure, demographic transition, ageing, exponential growth and Health care