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**Presenting symptoms/conditions and selected aspects of health care quality at the Outpatient Department (OPD) of the Wickramarachchi Ayurvedic Hospital, Yakkala**

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**Objective:** To describe the presenting symptoms/conditions and selected aspects of health care quality of the Outpatient Department (OPD) of the Wickramarachchi Ayurvedic Hospital.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted on patients seeking treatment from the OPD of the Wickramarachchi Ayurvedic Hospital, Yakkala between February to April 2007. A pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire was used to gather information from 250 patients.

**Results:** Fever, cold and respiratory symptoms (44.2%;n=46), musculoskeletal complaints (28.8%;n=30) and dermatological conditions (14.4%;n=15) were the commonest presentations among persons up to 40 years old. Musculoskeletal complaints (26.8%;n=38), fever, cold and respiratory symptoms (24.6%;n=35) diabetes and hypertension (20.4%;n=29) and eye problems (9.8%;n=14) were the commonest presentations among persons above 40 years.

Out of 250 patients, 56(22.4%) had visited the Ayurvedic Hospital as the first preference for the current illness and the balance 194(77.6%) patients had taken treatment from other health care institutions. The majority (86%;n=168) sought ayurvedic medicine after taking western medicine. The most common reason for giving up previous treatment methods was treatment failure (69%;n=135).

The distance between home and the hospital was <10 km for 52.4%(n=137) patients and >20 km for 11.6%(n=54) patients. Median total expenditure for one visit to the Ayurvedic hospital was Rs.200 (Range Rs. 00.00 to 3000.00) and 57.6%(n=144) had spent Rs.100-500 for one visit. Median waiting time for consultation was 90 minutes (Range 5 – 300min). Consultation time was <5 minutes in 52%(n=131) and >10minutes in 24%(n=60) of patients. Two hundred and seven (83%) patients were satisfied with treatment given and 224 (89.6%) on facilities provided by the Ayurvedic hospital. Statistically significant associations were observed between high satisfaction and low educational level (p<0.001) and previous treatment failure from other systems (p<0.001).

**Conclusion:** Patients seek ayurvedic treatment for various symptoms/diseases irrespective of their severity, patient's age and the distance to the hospital. The commonest reason for seeking ayurveda treatment was treatment failure of other methods. A majority were satisfied with the treatment provided and facilities available.