

Communicative effectiveness and speech intelligibility among ageing adult population in the Kandy District

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Background: With typical ageing, specific communication skills change due to the physical changes and cognitive changes, which is one of the most common problems among ageing adults. The communicative changes consist of speech, hearing, language, and voice difficulties that directly influence the effects of functional communication. The result of the present study will help identify how communication and speech skills change and can be used as norms to differentiate age-related vs disease-related defects in assessment and intervention.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to describe the communicative effectiveness and speech intelligibility among Sinhala speakers of ageing adult individuals 60 years or above in age in the Sri Lankan (SL) context.

Methods: The research study was based on quantitative methods with a descriptive cross-sectional study design via a web-based platform. The study population was 78 ageing adults representing each age category of 60-69, 70-79, and 80 \geq years and recruited using the purposive sampling method. Data collection was done based on an interviewer-administered questionnaire with rating scales and self-administered questionnaires. Data analysis was done based on the frequency distribution of study sample and other relevant statistical analysis was using the SPSS free version.

Results: There were less communication and speech intelligibility difficulties shown at the age of 60-69 years compared to other age groups. However, at the age of 70-79 years and 80 \geq years, there were more declines in the communication and speech intelligibility difficulties. At the age of 60-69 years, 70-79 years, and 80 \geq years, the self-reported questionnaire communicative difficulties were highest when compared to clinician reported questionnaire results. In the speech intelligibility, self-reported difficulties were highest when compared to clinician reported difficulties at the age of 60-69 years and 70-79 years, but at the age of 80 \geq years, clinician reported speech intelligibility difficulties were more when compared to the self-reported questionnaire results.

Conclusion: This present study examined the communicative effectiveness and speech intelligibility among all three age groups (60-69 years, 70-79 years, and 80 \geq years). There was communicative and speech intelligibility decline observed with ageing. These norms could be used in language assessments to increase the validity of the diagnosis. The present study could become a foundation for future research on ageing and communication in the SL context.

Keywords: *Communicative effectiveness, Speech intelligibility, Ageing adult population*