

## **Assessment of nutritional status and associated factors among institutionalized elderly in the Galle district**

M.A.M. Aasath<sup>1\*</sup> and C.J. Wijesinghe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *B.Sc. Nursing Degree Programme, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna*

Senior citizens in a country like Sri Lanka account for a considerable quota of community health because they are more susceptible to health problems. Therefore, we need to reflect on their health status and nutritional status. The aim of this study was to evaluate the nutritional status and associated factors among inmates of selected elders' homes in Galle district. A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among 169 institutionalized older persons from selected elders' homes in Galle district. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect information on the study variables and the nutritional status was assessed using the Mini Nutritional Assessment (MNA) questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software package. The study participants had a mean age of  $72.38 \pm 10.63$  years: of them 71.8% were females and 28.2% were males. According to MNA, 44.4% of them were malnourished, 46.1% were at risk for malnutrition and only 9.5% were well nourished. The factors associated with poor nutritional status included presence of mental health problems, problems of gastro-intestinal tract and a high cholesterol level ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, eating dependency and mobility dependency were significantly associated with poor nutritional status ( $p < 0.01$ ). The age and gender of inmates and being in a crowded home ( $> 30$  inmates) were not associated with their nutritional status. This study reveals that the nutritional status is not satisfactory among the inmates of elders' homes in Galle and is affected by many health related factors. Regular nutritional screening and correction of health problems will be beneficial to improve their nutritional status.

Key words: institutionalized elderly, Mini Nutritional Assessment, nutritional status

\*muhammadhuasath@gmail.com