

Health care demand behaviour of household in Valikamam area of Jaffna district

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This study is to identify the socio economic factors of household that influence the people to seek medical help and examine magnitude of these factors' influence in seeking medical help in Valikamam area of Jaffna district.

Stratified random sampling method was used to select the sample for this study from Valikamam area. Valikamam area was stratified into seven AGA divisions such as Jaffna, Nallur, Valikamam south-west, Valikamam-west, Valikamam-south, Valikamam-east and Valikamam-north. Household were selected randomly from each AGA divisions, and covered approximately 660 individuals living in 151 households.

Binominal probit model was developed for this study. The result of this model reveals that higher age tends to be associated with an increase in the probability of seeking medical care. This means that when adult workers fall in ill and did not attend to work there is high opportunity cost to household and when old people fall in ill there is high risk for their life. The probability of seeking medical care decreases when the family size increases. The probability of falling ill and seeking medical care of wealthy family members is lower than the probability of poor family. This is due to calorie and nutritional level in their food consumption and sanitary condition of their house. People below the poverty line are not consuming the recommended calorie and nutrient per day. There is an interaction effect of income and family size on seeking medical help. Family members were able to afford to seek medical care when financial and human resources of the family increases. There are interaction effects of income, education level of the household head and mother on seeking medical help. When two households have same income but differ in the education level of head and mother the family with higher education level of head and mother has higher probability to seek medical help when family members get sick. The probability of seeking medical help for male member is higher than the female member in a family. Department of health should make arrangements to reduce the difficulties in seeking medical help by people especially poor people, by increasing number of doctors in district hospital and rural health care center, thereby they can reduce the waiting time to get medical help and opportunity cost of poor people in getting medical help.