

The expectation of life without disability in Sri Lanka

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This paper calculates the Expectation of Life without Disability for Sri Lanka. No one has ever attempted to calculate health expectancies up to now for Sri Lanka, and, hence, this paper will be the first of its kind and can be regarded as a great contribution to the field of Sri Lankan demography. Life expectancy is composed of lengths of time spent in different states of health until death. These lengths of time in different states of health are health expectancies and they combine information on both mortality and morbidity. Although this aspect is new to Sri Lanka, the concept of health expectancies as health indicators was proposed in 1964 and the first example was published in a report of the US Department of Health Education and Welfare. The present paper contains estimates of 'Disability-Free Life Expectancy' calculated using a method devised by Sullivan and is applicable to any state of health definition. Sullivan health expectancy reflects the current health of a real population adjusted for mortality levels and is independent of age structure. Health expectancy calculated by Sullivan's method is the number of remaining years, at a particular age, which an individual can expect to live in a healthy state (however health may be defined). It was observed that women in 2012 at age 65 could be expected to live a further 17.8 years of which 9.3 years (52.4%) would be spent without disability, disability being defined as restrictions in daily activities due to longstanding illness(es), condition(s) or handicap(s). In the case of men who were at age 65 in 2012, they could be expected to live 14.7 years of which 8.8 years (60%) would be spent without disability. The analysis suggests that men live a greater proportion of their lives without disability than do women. The data used were the age-specific prevalence (proportions) of the population in healthy and unhealthy states (often obtained from cross-sectional surveys), and age-specific mortality information taken from a period life table. Sullivan health expectancy is not very sensitive to the size of the age groups; thus, an abridged life table was used.

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