

December 2022

# 2 NEWSLETTER FOR HAPPY SENIORS

## Elderly and Palliative care unit, Colombo South Teaching Hospital



### ✓ Background: Identification of issues

Sri Lanka is one of the fastest ageing populations in the world and there was 12.4% of population age more than 60 years in 2012, making the country with the highest proportion of elderly in South Asia. It is estimated that by 2040 there will be nearly 25% of the population who are elderly.

Additionally, except for the pain clinics in several teaching hospitals and a palliative unit at Apeksha hospital, there is a scarcity of palliative units in the country, especially to cater the non-malignant patients.

Hence, the establishment of Geriatric and Palliative Care Unit was conceptualized in 2018.

### 🗨 Establishment of the unit

**2018** - Initially the Geriatric service in CSTH was initiated in 2018 as a voluntary service as once a week afternoon clinic with several practical issues and oppositions which was then developed to the current status where it now serve as the only treatment and training center for Geriatric care. It's development as follow.

**2018** - Once a week clinic as a volunteer service with the help of the Director of the hospital. It was pioneered by a resident physician, 2 volunteer medical officers with diploma in Geriatric medicine, a physiotherapist, and a social worker. Referrals within the hospital were seen and several outreach clinics were conducted in the community.

**2019 September** - 2 medical officers with diploma in Geriatric medicine and 1 medical officer with diploma in Palliative Care were appointed to the unit from the Ministry of Health.

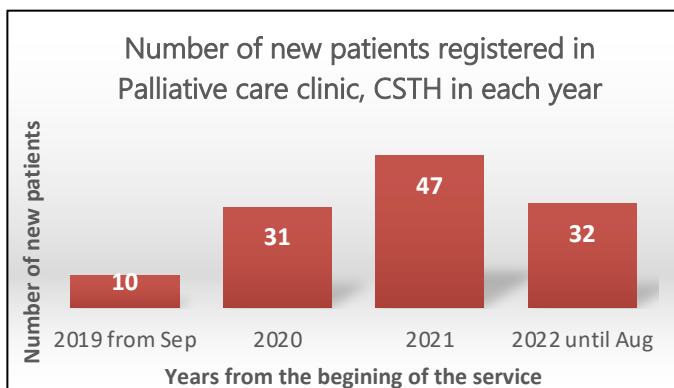
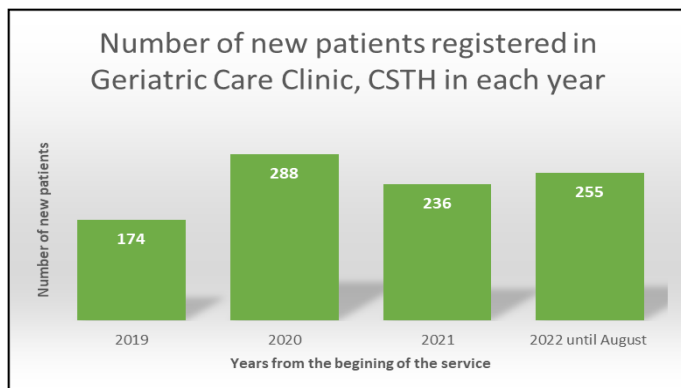
**2020 January** - Geriatric and Palliative Care Unit was declared open in an unutilized doctors' quarters' area. Daily clinics were started and Geriatric and Palliative referrals from different hospital units were seen. Furthermore, monthly outreach clinic visits were organized.

**2020 June** - After accreditation by Postgraduate Institute of Medicine as a training unit for Geriatric MD, pre-MD and post-MD training was commenced. Following that the services were extended to provide orthogeriatric care to the elders admitted following falls and fragility fractures to the Accident Service and Orthopaedic Wards.

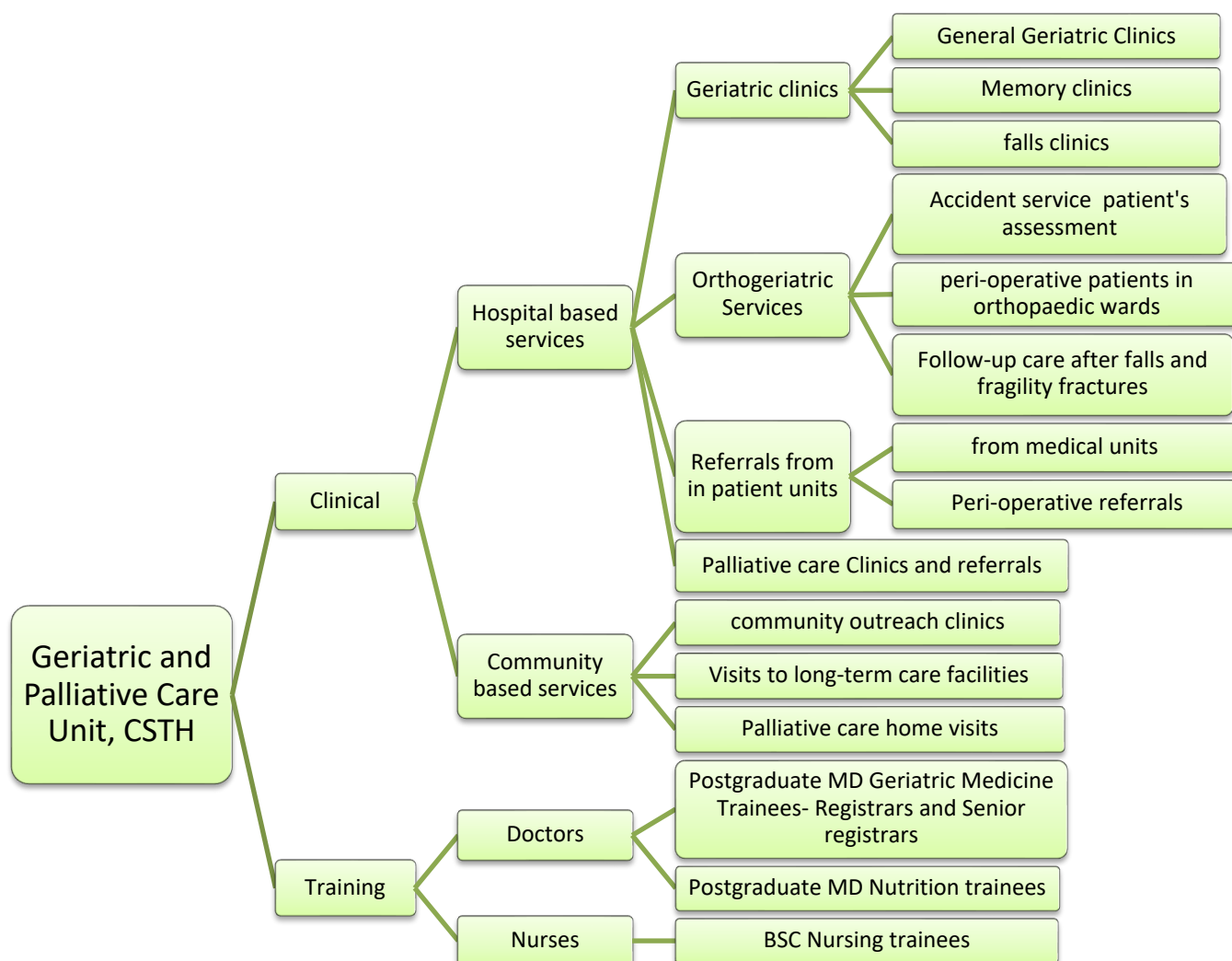


## Current Situation

Infrastructures of the unit is been developed with the use of hospital assets and donations from volunteers. At the moment, there are 3 medical officers with diploma in Geriatric medicine, one medical officer with palliative care diploma, a physiotherapist, training registrars and senior registrars in MD Geriatric Medicine provide the service under the supervision of a resident consultant physician with training and special interest in Geriatric Medicine. They, further have developed a small physiotherapy room with some basic equipment.



## ✓ Detailed activities/ Services provided from the Elderly care unit, Colombo South Teaching Hospital



✓ Basic Criteria for patient recruitment for above services

- ✓ Age should be more than 60 years unless there is evidence of frailty syndromes
  - ✓ Frailty and frailty syndromes (Ex: falls/ instability, immobility, incontinence etc.)
- The patients are taken as referral basis or those patients who have been identified during inward referrals and during community based services.

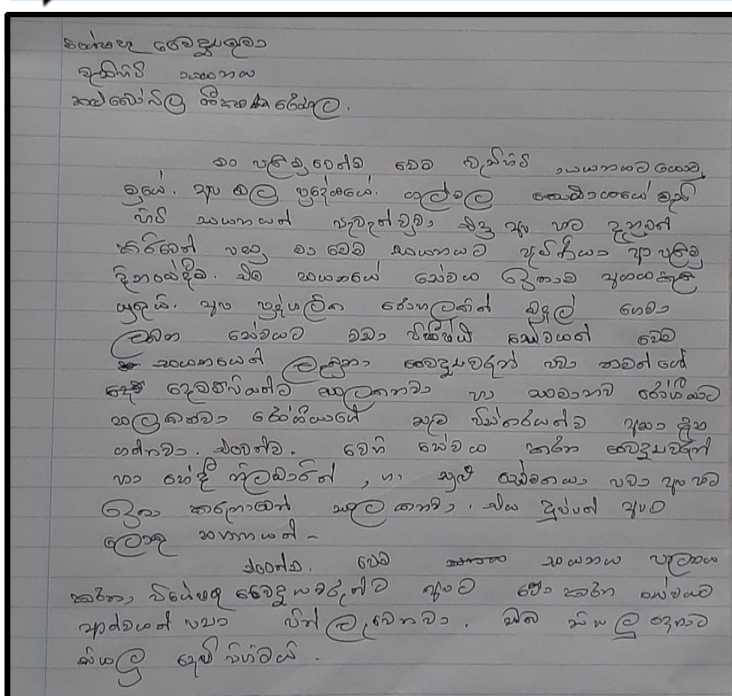
🏠 Ongoing quality improvement survey has identified that...

- On average 94% of the time the patients are seen on the same day when they come to the unit for registration and 3% of the patients are seen during the same week and 3% of the time the delay is due to the patient factors.
- Average waiting time during the day of appointment is as low as 4.36 minutes
- Our average consultation time per person during the first visit is 75.45 minutes
- Our average consultation time per person during the subsequent visits is 24.40 minutes
- During the survey, most of the patient reveals that the above qualities are the best things about this unit which they have never experience from anywhere else



Physiotherapy session for a patient with gait instability at onsite physiotherapy room

💬 A comment by a patient...



**Specialist Doctor  
Elderly Clinic  
Kalubowila Teaching Hospital**

I referred to this clinic after the awareness held in Galwala Division in our area. The service received on the first day of coming to the clinic should be highly appreciated. We received better service from this clinic than the service we paid for in a private hospital. Even doctors treat their patients as they treat their parents. Every detail of the patient is heard. And the doctors, nurses and even minor workers who work there treat us very kindly. It is a great relief for us poor people. And to the main specialists in charge of this clinic, thank you very much for the service you are doing, God bless you all.

## ✓ Kotte, an example of a community out-reach clinic

(The pictures of people are published with their permission)

- The service is provided for patients aged 60 years and above.
- Provides quality, limited medical care with dignity and confidentiality, using the services of the professional staff of Colombo South teaching hospital Elderly and Palliative care unit.
- The unit visits communities based on the requests of elderly committees or other community groups.

### Preparation by Elderly Committee



### (1) The registration to the out-reach clinic



### (2) Record information of participants



### (3) Measure height and weight



### (4) Vision + hearing check



### (5) Physical check



### (6) Measure blood sugar



### (7) Counseling diagnosis



### (8) Physiotherapy



### (9) Recreation



### Messages from the field

## Challenges

- ✓ Need of government support to expand the unit
- ✓ Unavailability of a ward and intermediate care facilities
- ✓ Lack of multidisciplinary team members



We are pleased about this outreach clinic. For some elder people in the village, the cost of doing this kind of health test personally is too much. A free clinic like this is precious for us to check our health conditions.  
— A senior citizen

Some elders require the assistance of their caregivers or children to go to outside hospitals, but sometimes the children are busy with their duties, making it difficult. Since these clinics are within walking distance, they can attend on their own.  
— A senior citizen

Please send good activity in your community to [jicaceecs@gmail.com](mailto:jicaceecs@gmail.com)

Directorate of Youth, Elders and Disabled, Ministry of Health

National Secretariat for Elders, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs, and Social Empowerment

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Project for Capacity Enhancement of Elderly Service in the Community