

**PREVALENCE AND PREVENTION OF NON-
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AMONG TECHNICAL
PERSONNEL IN THE SRI LANKAN NAVY**

Amith Chandimal Samarasinghe

(219302L)

Degree of Master of Science in Occupational Safety and Health
Management

Department of Building Economics

University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka

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A.C. Samarasinghe

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension, are a growing global health burden with serious implications for morbidity, mortality, and healthcare systems. In Sri Lanka, NCDs account for approximately 83% of total deaths, creating a significant strain on public health services. Military populations, including naval personnel, face unique occupational and environmental stressors that may increase their vulnerability to NCDs. However, there is limited research on NCD prevalence and prevention among technical personnel. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the prevalence of NCDs among technical personnel in the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN). They are junior sailors, senior sailors and officers professionally mechanics, electricians and engineers. Additionally, it examines their level of awareness regarding NCD prevention strategies and their adherence to these measures.

Initially, a comprehensive literature review was conducted with the purpose of getting familiarise with the research phenomenon. Secondly, a mixed-methods cross-sectional study was conducted, encompassing 294 participants selected through random sampling from various naval ships and bases. Quantitative data collection was carried out using structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with a subset of participants and Navy health officers.

The quantitative analysis identified hypertension (8.68%), diabetes (4.34%), and obesity (4.34%) as the most prevalent non-communicable diseases, with junior sailors being particularly affected. Officers demonstrated full awareness (100%) and high participation (92%) in NCD prevention programs, whereas junior personnel exhibited significantly lower levels of engagement. The qualitative findings highlighted several barriers to prevention, including limited time availability, insufficient awareness, and a predominant emphasis on physical fitness rather than metabolic health.

The study concludes with recommendations to improve awareness, accessibility, and engagement with NCD prevention strategies in military settings. Suggested measures include mobile health initiatives, leadership-driven wellness programs, and integrated mental health and nutrition services. The findings contribute to evidence-based policymaking and aim to enhance health outcomes and operational readiness among SLN technical personnel.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

Abbreviation	Description
AFHSB	Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch
BMI	Body Mass Index
CDC	Centre For Disease Control and Prevention
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CVD	Cardiovascular Diseases
DOD	Department of Defence
HAWC	Health and Wellness Centre
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RNMS	Royal Navy Medical Service
SLN	Sri Lanka Navy
WHO	World Health Organisation

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