HEALTH DAMAGE OF AUTO-DIESEL EMISSIONS IN COLOMBO

[1]Saroj Jayasinghe, [1]Pubudu de Silva and [2] Sunil Chandrasiri
[1]Department of Medicine, University of Colombo
[2]Department of Economics, University of Colombo

Abstract

The vehicle population in Sri Lanka has marked a significant increase during the post-liberalization period, which commenced in 1977. The high growth of diesel-powered vehicles and high rate of auto-diesel consumption is clearly noticeable through out the 1990s. This has led to continuous deterioration of ambient air quality levels in Colombo. In view of these developments a separate study has been initiated to examine health effects of diesel vehicle exhaust emissions in Colombo. Chandrasiri and Jayasinghe 1998) conducted one of the initial studies on health effects of vehicle emissions in Colombo, focusing on economic evaluation of interventions to reduce harm from the resultant air pollution. The time is opportune to carry out a fresh study on health damage of vehicular emissions as the ambient air quality level in Colombo is deteriorating at a rapid rate and soon policy makers would be called upon to make decisions on the best control options.

The health impact of auto-diesel emissions has been estimated using adjusted cost of illness (COI) approach. More specifically, it is based on a sample study of patients selected on cross-sectional basis covering both public and private sector hospitals in Colombo. It is expected that the findings of the proposed study would provide policy makers with a more rational and precise basis for controlling auto-diesel exhaust emissions.