



Sri Lanka: Health Crisis in A model Health System

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peoples dispatch

REGIONS ABOUT ESPAÑOL

With IMF in the picture, Sri Lanka's public health sector faces a new crisis

Which the current economic crisis has had a disastrous impact on the health sector, the conditions that will be imposed as part of a possible IMF deal could bring about long-term structural challenges

April 30, 2022 by Shriya Singh



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Sri Lankan health services "heading for total breakdown"

Saman Gunadasa
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Last Thursday, the Sri Lankan Medical Association (SLMA), the peak body for all medical practitioners, held a press conference to warn that the country's health sector is heading towards as "total breakdown."

Addressing the media, leading medical experts said that the island confronts a serious emergency with shortages of around 300 essential medicines,

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Public health services imperative as crisis continues in Sri Lanka

As the economic crisis continues, health activists call for prioritization of the public health services

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News | Health

'Death sentence': Doctors in Sri Lanka decry medicine shortage

As essential medications disappear from shelves, doctors are forced to postpone life-saving procedures amid unprecedented economic crisis.



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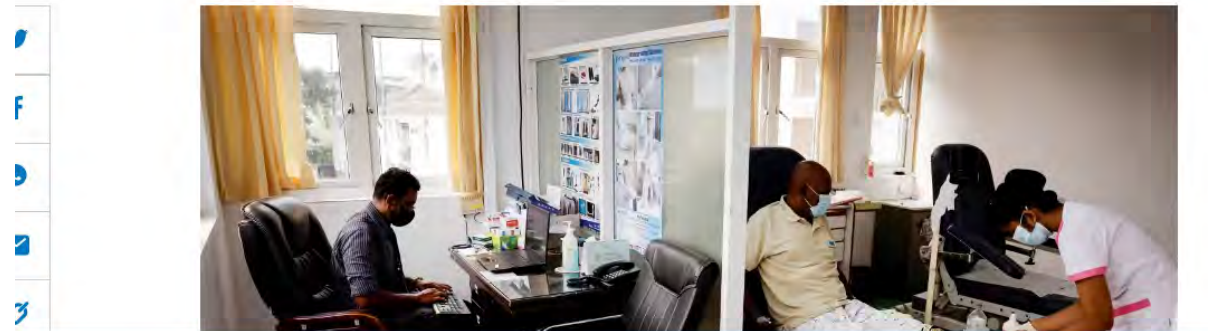
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SRI LANKA CRISIS

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'We can't go on like this,' says medical union spokesman



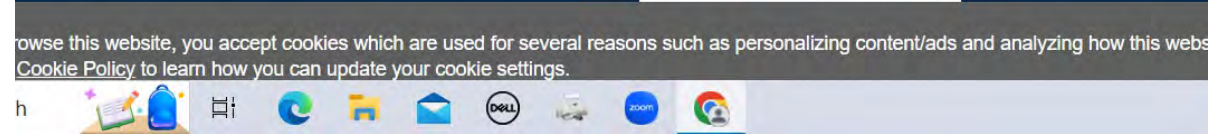
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News

Immediate withdrawal of contaminated eye-drop: MSD sends out circular

View(s): 157

By Kumudini Hettiarachchi

A batch of a common eye-drop, confirmed as being contaminated by a bacterium, has been withdrawn but many queried as to what would happen to the patients whose vision has been impaired.

The eye-drop is Prednisolone Acetate Ophthalmic Suspension USP IO-PRED-S, a common steroid and anti-inflammatory medication used after eye surgery in the state health sector. The contaminated stock was from a manufacturer based in Gujarat, India. Earlier, after adverse reactions were reported in patients, the Health Ministry temporarily halted the use of this eye-drop.

With the analytical report finding that "the sample does not conform to USP Specifications for Sterility test", the National Medicines Quality Assurance Laboratory (NMQUAL) has recommended that Batch No. N22L16 with the manufacture date of December 2022 and expiry date of November 2024 be 'withdrawn'.

Circular No. MSD/Q/P/2023/25 issued by the Health Ministry's Medical Supplies Division (MSD), which is in the possession of *the Sunday Times*, instructs that the batch be withdrawn from use immediately.

The circular signed by MSD Director Dr. H.M.K. Wickramanayake has been sent to numerous hospitals, all provincial and regional directors of health and other health institutions and campaigns.

The Sunday Times as far back as April 23, reported the contamination of the eye drops by the bacterium *Burkholderia cepacia* and how patients at the premier National Eye Hospital, Colombo, had been affected by its use.

Other News Articles

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Sri Lanka - Health in the middle of a crisis

The Lancet Regional Health – Southeast Asia



The Lancet Regional Health - Southeast Asia 2022;4: 100067 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lansea.2022.100067>

Sri Lanka—once a role model for health and development—is currently in an economic crisis. Attempts at swift development by borrowing enormous amounts of money at high interest rates, banning the import of chemical pesticides to curb outflow of foreign currency, tax cuts, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia–Ukraine war on tourism have catapulted Sri Lanka into an economic downfall. The economic mismanagement and its consequences are unforgivable because it has forced millions of people into poverty.

Most importantly, the economic crisis has put national health care in jeopardy. Physicians and health

increase of tuberculosis cases. If Sri Lanka does not receive help, there is a high chance of such a surge occurring. Availability of clean and potable water is also bound to be an issue. Wastewater treatment would effectively prevent an outbreak of water-communicable diseases, such as cholera. The authorities need to ensure water availability and wastewater facilities to all people without discrimination by religion, region of residence, or political ideology to prevent similar events that occurred in Zimbabwe during the economic crisis in 2009. The COVID-19 pandemic had already led to underreporting of dengue cases in Sri Lanka, and with

POLITICS

Sri Lanka hospitals issue SOS as vital drugs, equipment run out

Doctors warn deaths could exceed COVID and other disasters combined

Worsening economic crisis in Sri Lanka: impacts on health

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic is receding in Sri Lanka, we are battling a fresh challenge: a health catastrophe stemming from economic and political crises.

Threats to health from an economic crisis are multifold.¹ Stress and lack of health care can increase cardiovascular morbidities. Malnutrition can affect generations of children. Communicable diseases can increase due to rising costs

social networks and professional organisations overseas to obtain financial donations and drugs, consumables, and equipment must be taken.

Second, cost-effectiveness of interventions will have to be a priority concern. A series of steps are proposed, as follows: more reliance on clinical judgment during clinical practice rather than laboratory investigations, development of appropriate cost-effective protocols for management, and prescribing of generic medicines that are cheaper.²

Third, establishing a stronger social

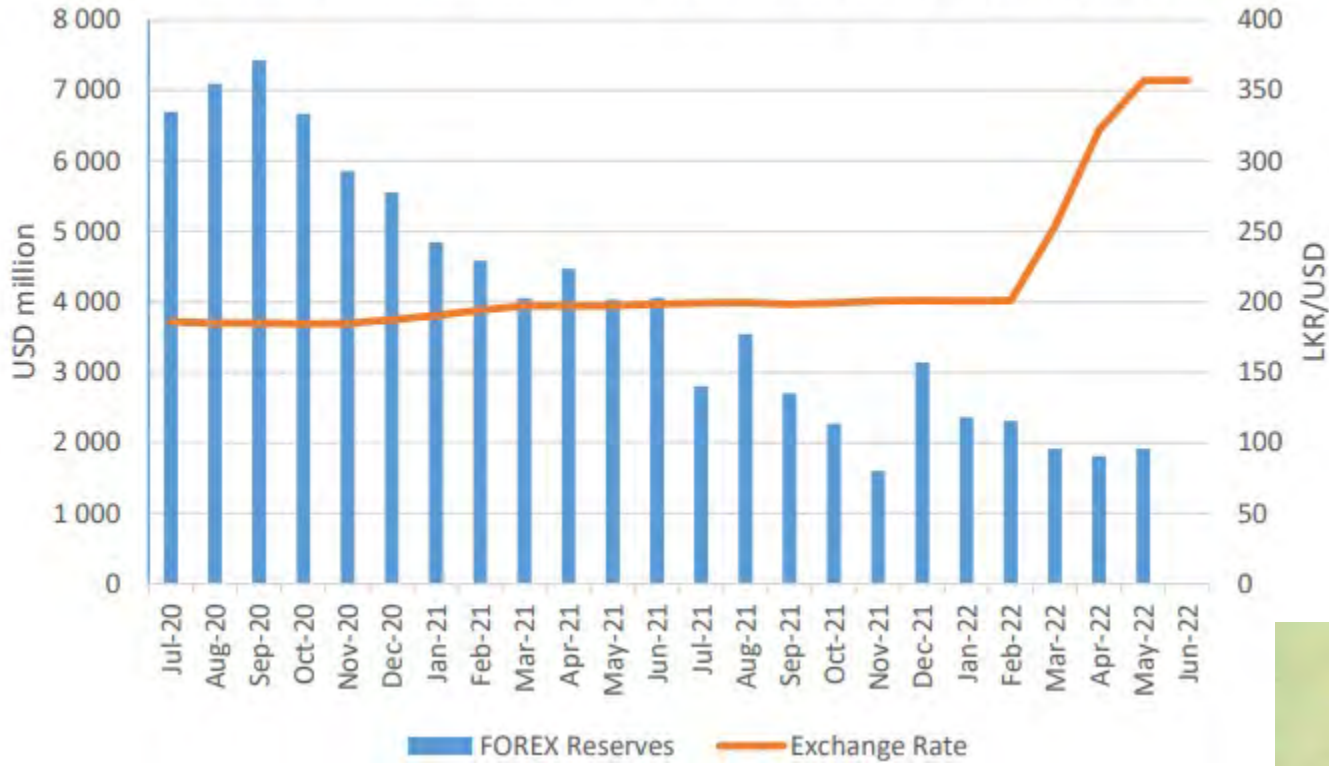
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- Jayasinghe S. Illness and social protection: an agenda for action in Sri Lanka. *Sri Lanka J Soc Sci* 2010; **33-34**: 25–29.



Published Online: May 12, 2022 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lansea.2022.100067>



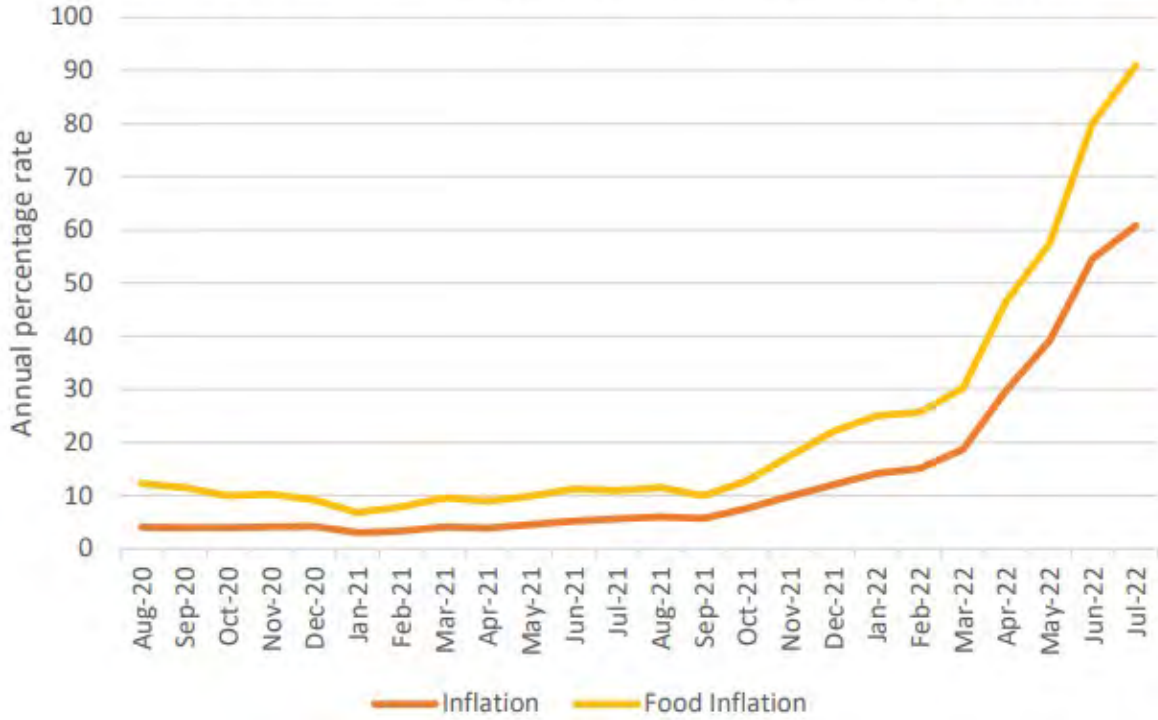
Figure 2: Sri Lanka – International reserves and exchange rate, 2020-2022



Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2022

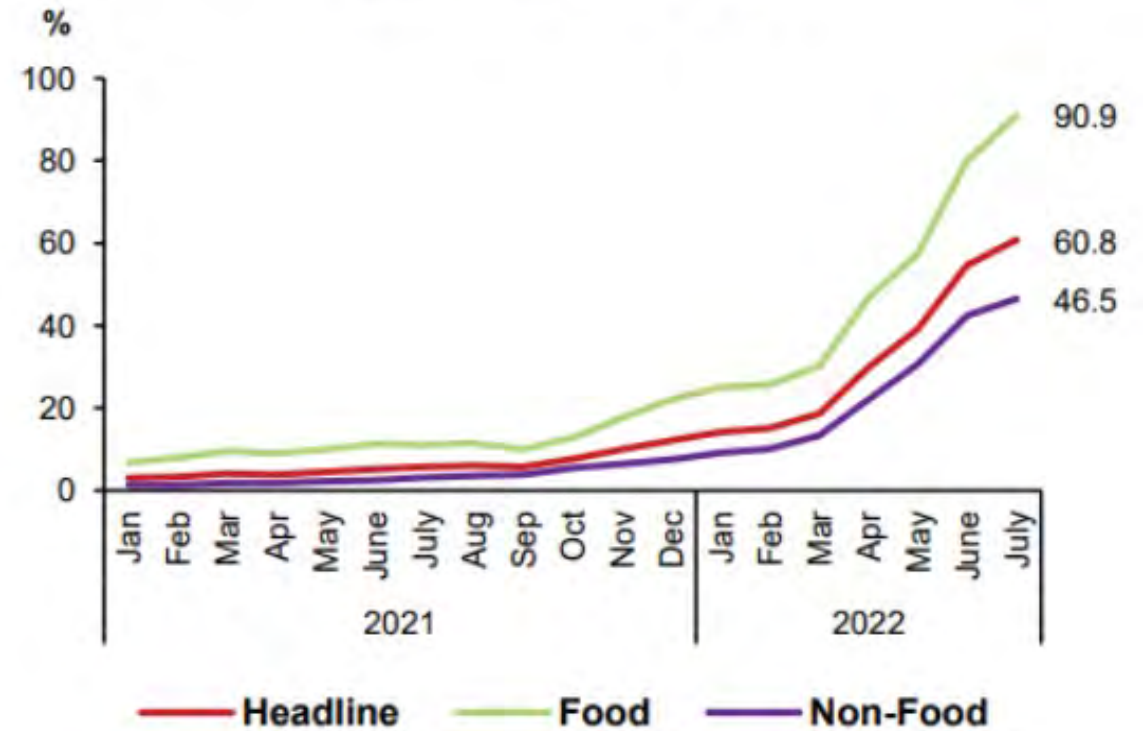


Sri Lanka – General and food inflation, 2020-2022



Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2022

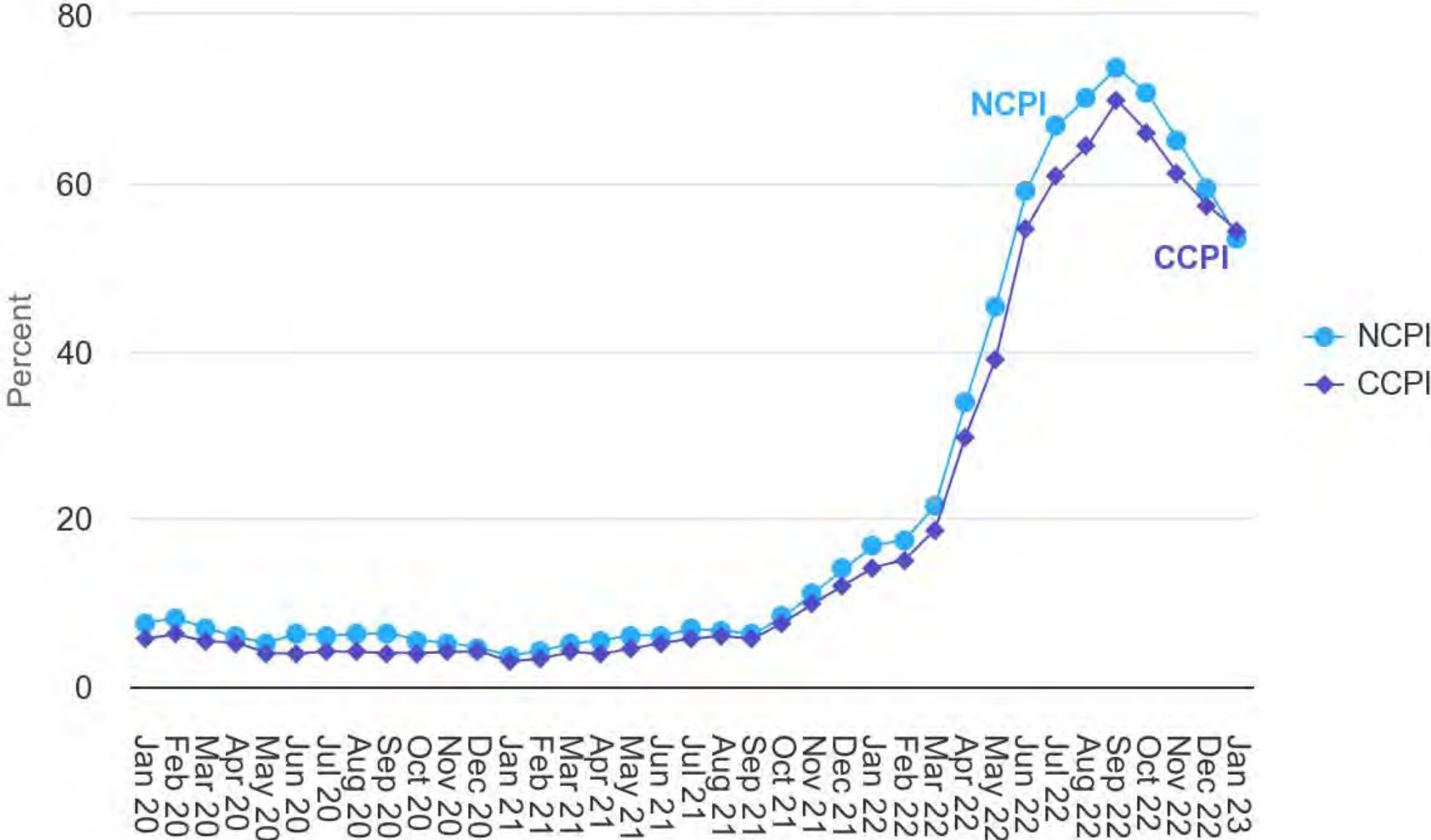
Sri Lanka – Annual inflation rate (year-on-year change)



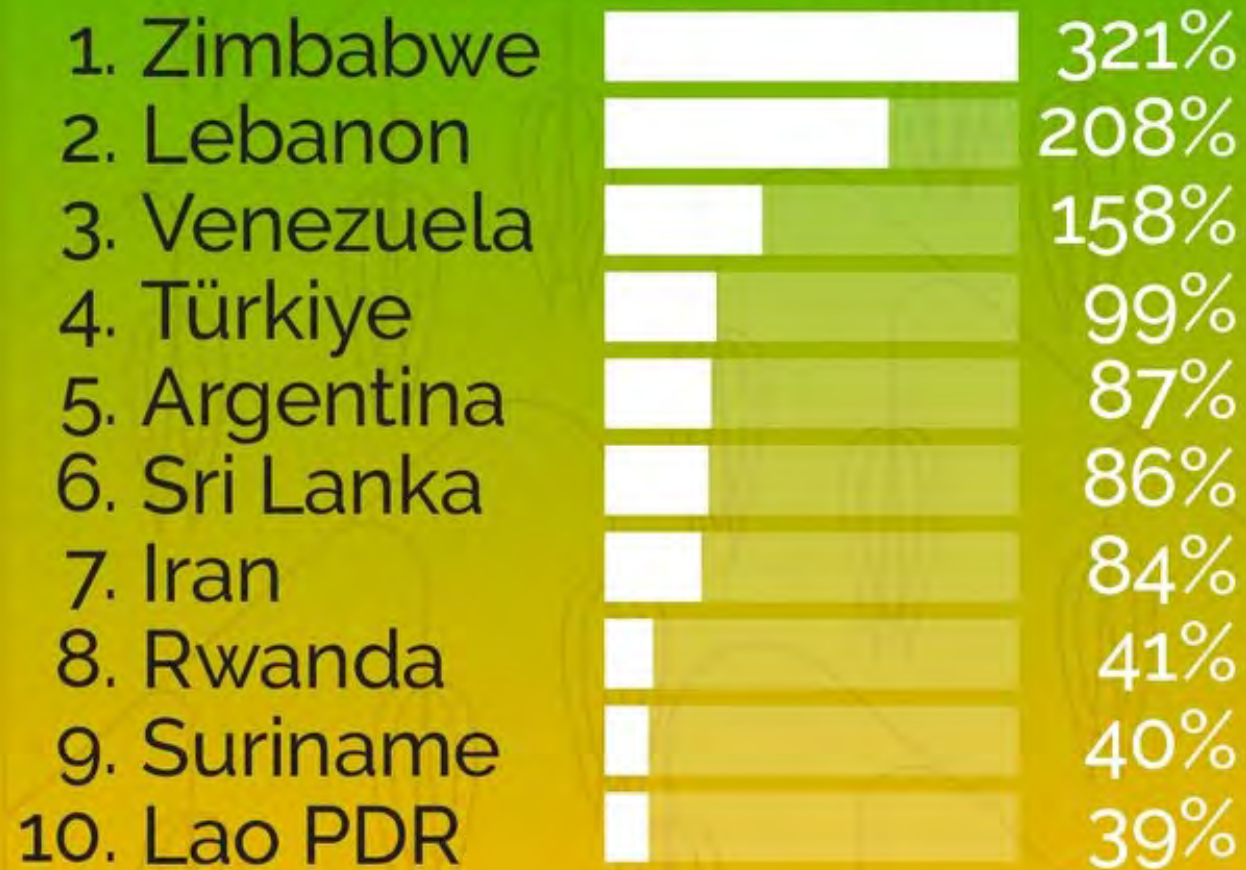
Department of Census and Statistics 2022

Inflation: CCPI and NCPI

Y-o-Y Percentage Change



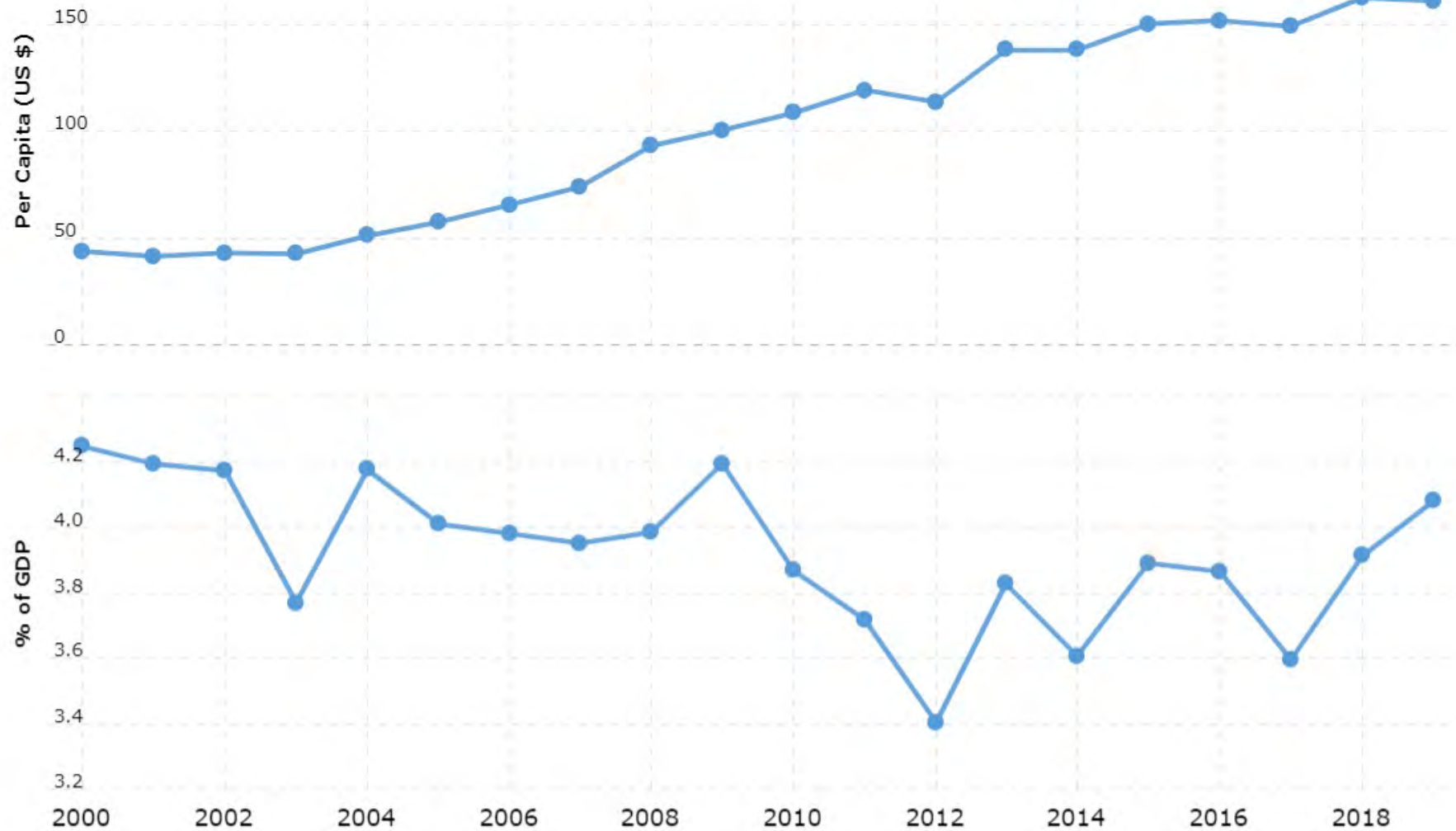
Top Ten Countries Hit Hardest By Food Inflation (Nominal % YoY)



Food **Security**

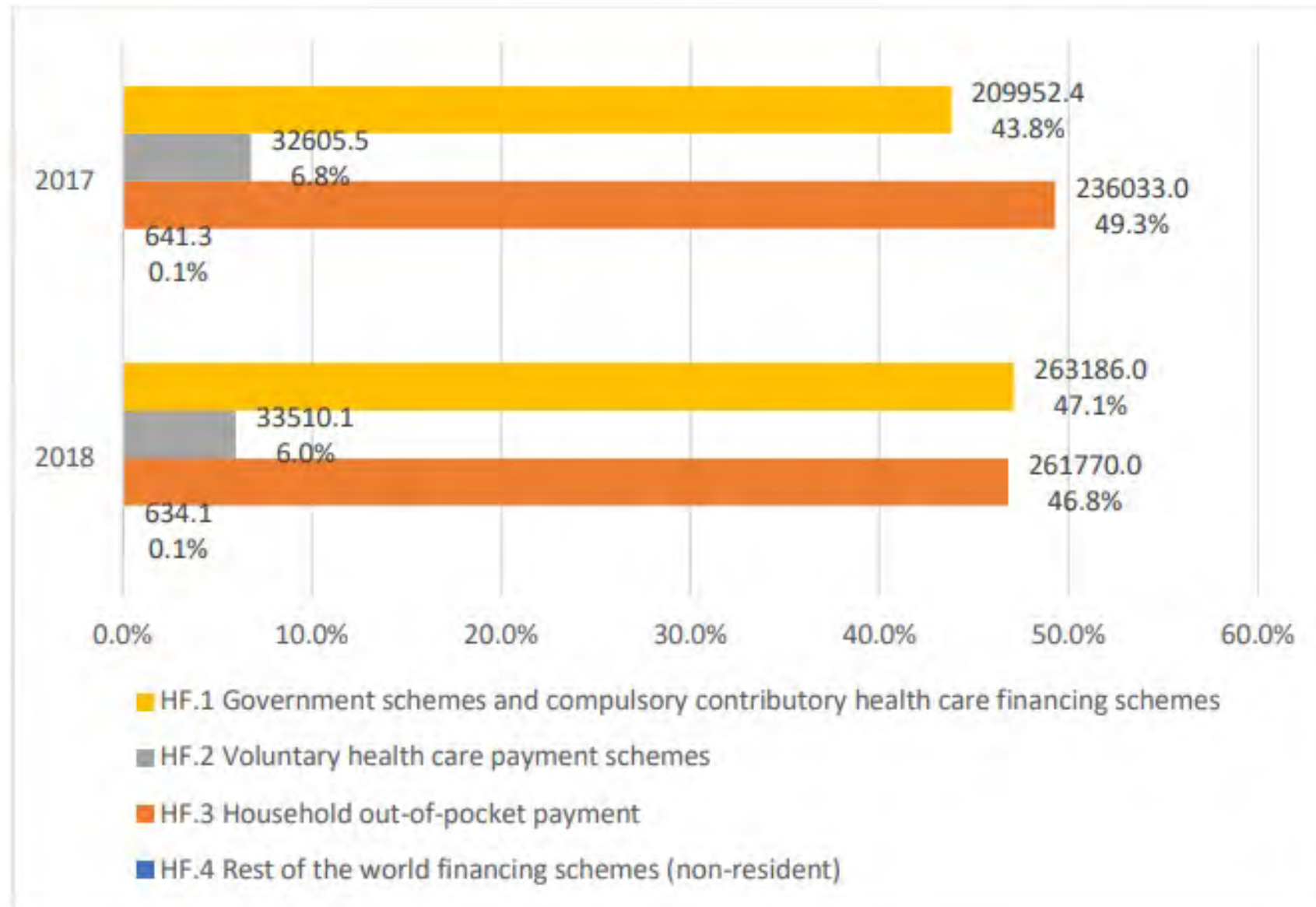
*Information based on where food price inflation data are available.

Health Expenditure of Sri Lanka

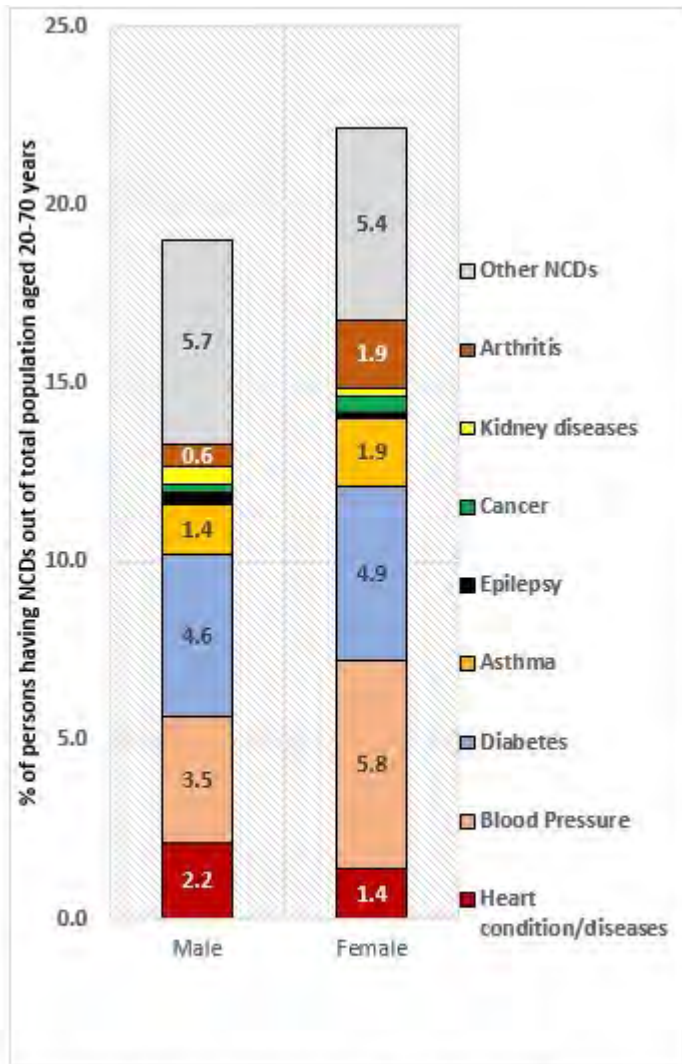


Source: <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/LKA/sri-lanka/healthcare-spending>

Health Expenditure by source

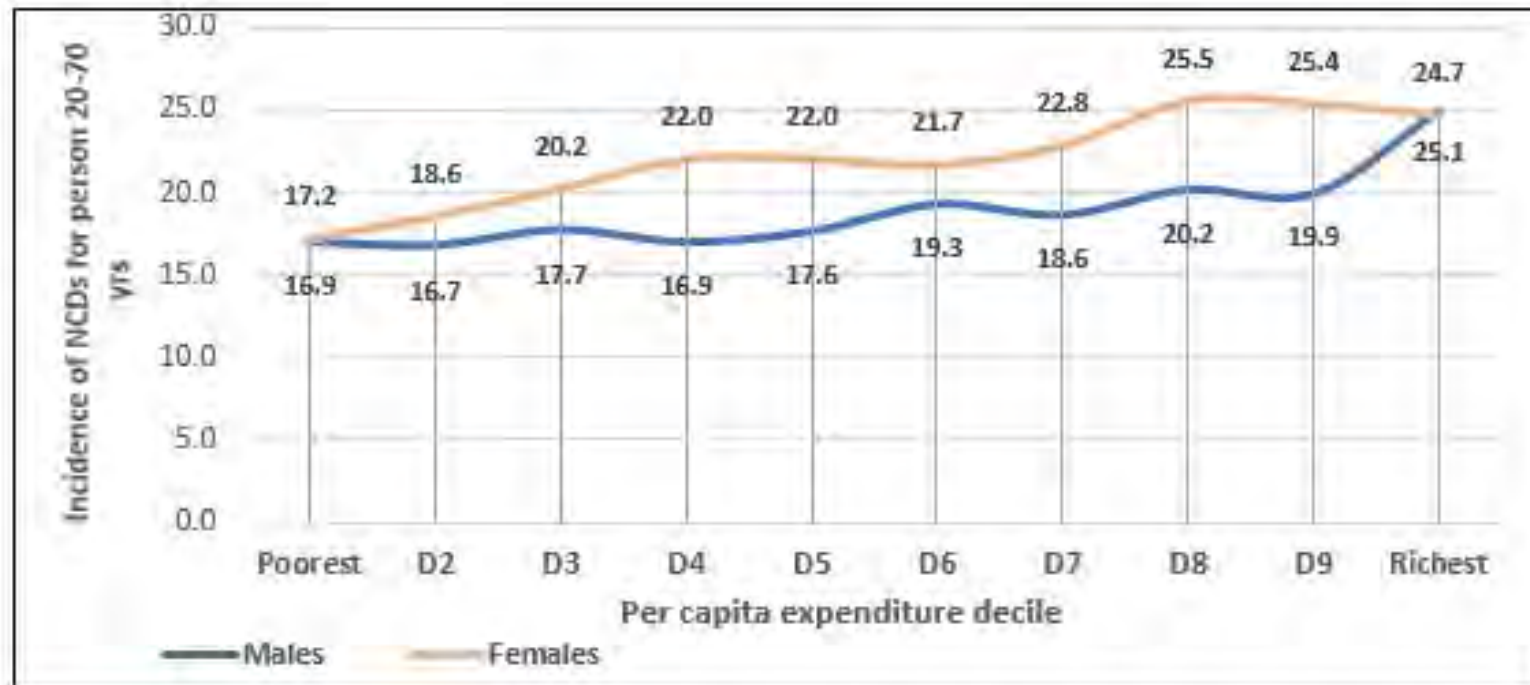


Incidence of NCDs for Persons 20-70 years in Sri Lanka by Sex



Source: Author's estimates based on HIES-2016 of DCS

Proportion of Persons (20-70 years) Affected by NCDs by Per capita Expenditure Deciles (D1=Poorest 10% to D10=Richest 10%) and Sex - 2016



Source: Author's estimates based on HIES-2016, conducted by DCS, Sri Lanka; Note: In the chart → D1- Poorest Group & D10- Richest Group

2019/05/15

2022/03/15

2022/04/29

16	ENALAPRIL	Tablet/ capsule	5 mg	7.21	5 mg	10.13	5 mg	14.18
	ENALAPRIL	Tablet/ capsule	10 mg	12.14	10 mg	17.07	10 mg	23.90
17	ATE NOLOL	Tablet/ capsule	25mg	3.60	25mg	5.06	25mg	7.08
	ATE NOLOL	Tablet/ capsule	50 mg	5.29	50 mg	7.43	50 mg	10.40
	ATE NOLOL	Tablet/ capsule	100 mg	15.62	100 mg	21.96	100 mg	30.74
18	NIFEDIPINE – sustained release	Tablet/ capsule	20 mg	4.45	20 mg	6.26	20 mg	8.76
19	CLOPIDOGREL	Tablet/ capsule	75 mg	21.03	75 mg	29.57	75 mg	41.40
20	ATORVASTATIN	Tablet/ capsule	5mg	7.72	5mg	10.85	5mg	15.19



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 The Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
 EXTRAORDINARY

අංක 2277/55 - 2022 අංශුල් මාර් 29 දා දැනට පිටවුවේ | 2022.04.29
 No. 2277/55 - FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2022

(Published by Authority)

Column I	Column II Generic Name	Column III Route of Administration/ Dosage forms	Column IV Strength	Column V Maximum Retail Price Per unit (SLR)
1	ALBENDAZOLE	Tablet/ capsule	400mg	50.67
2	AMOXICILLIN+CLAVULANIC ACID	Oral suspension	156mg/ 5ml	485.59
	AMOXICILLIN+CLAVULANIC ACID	Tablet/ capsule	375mg	59.79

Published 2022.03.15

Column I	Column II Generic Name	Column III Route of Administration/ Dosage forms	Column IV Strength	Column V Maximum Retail Price Per unit (SLR)
1	ALBENDAZOLE	Tablet/ capsule	400mg	70.94
2	AMOXICILLIN+CLAVULANIC ACID	Oral suspension	156mg/ 5ml	679.83
	AMOXICILLIN+CLAVULANIC ACID	Tablet/ capsule	375mg	83.71

Published 2022.04.29

Table 5: Five highest value essential medicines (from the 15 selected – 2021/22)

Key medicines in EML list	LKR – Billion 21/22 (Actual)	LKR – Billion 22/23 (Estimated)*
Gliclazide	3.6	4.6
Metformin	3.6	3.8
Amoxicillin Clavulanic Acid	3.2	3.2
Losartan Potassium	2.9	3.3
Atorvastatin	2.5	3.1
Total	15	18

*Estimate provided by the MSD and local market projection

Table 6 : Maximum retail prices (LKR) of the most widely used brands of each of the five highest value essential medicines (listed in table 4) indicating the steep price increases over two years.

Molecule name	Dose (mg)	MRP 2022	MRP 2021	MRP 2020
Atorvastatin Tablets				
ATORVA	10 mg	26	15	12
ATORVA	20 mg	41	23	18
ATORLIP	10 mg	12.5	8	6
ATORLIP	20 mg	21	14	9
Losartan Tablets				
ZAART	50 mg	24	13	10
ZAART	25 mg	12	8.5	6.5
LOSACAR	50 mg	24	13	10
LOSACAR	25 mg	17.37	9.6	7.6
Metformin Tablets				
GLYCOMET	500mg	9.3	7.3	5.5
GLYCOMET	850mg	17.50	9.69	7.73
GLUCOPHAGE	500mg	9.34	6.44	4.50
GLUCOPHAGE	850mg	17.50	9.30	7.73
Gliclazide Tablets				
DIAMICRON	60 mg - MR	72.63	38.39	32.00
DIAMICRON	80 mg	26.70	14.71	11.81
DIAMICRON	30 mg - MR	45.07	24.40	11.81
RECLIDE	60 mg - MR	31.97	26.97	22.76
RECLIDE	30 mg - MR	17.42	14.97	12.37

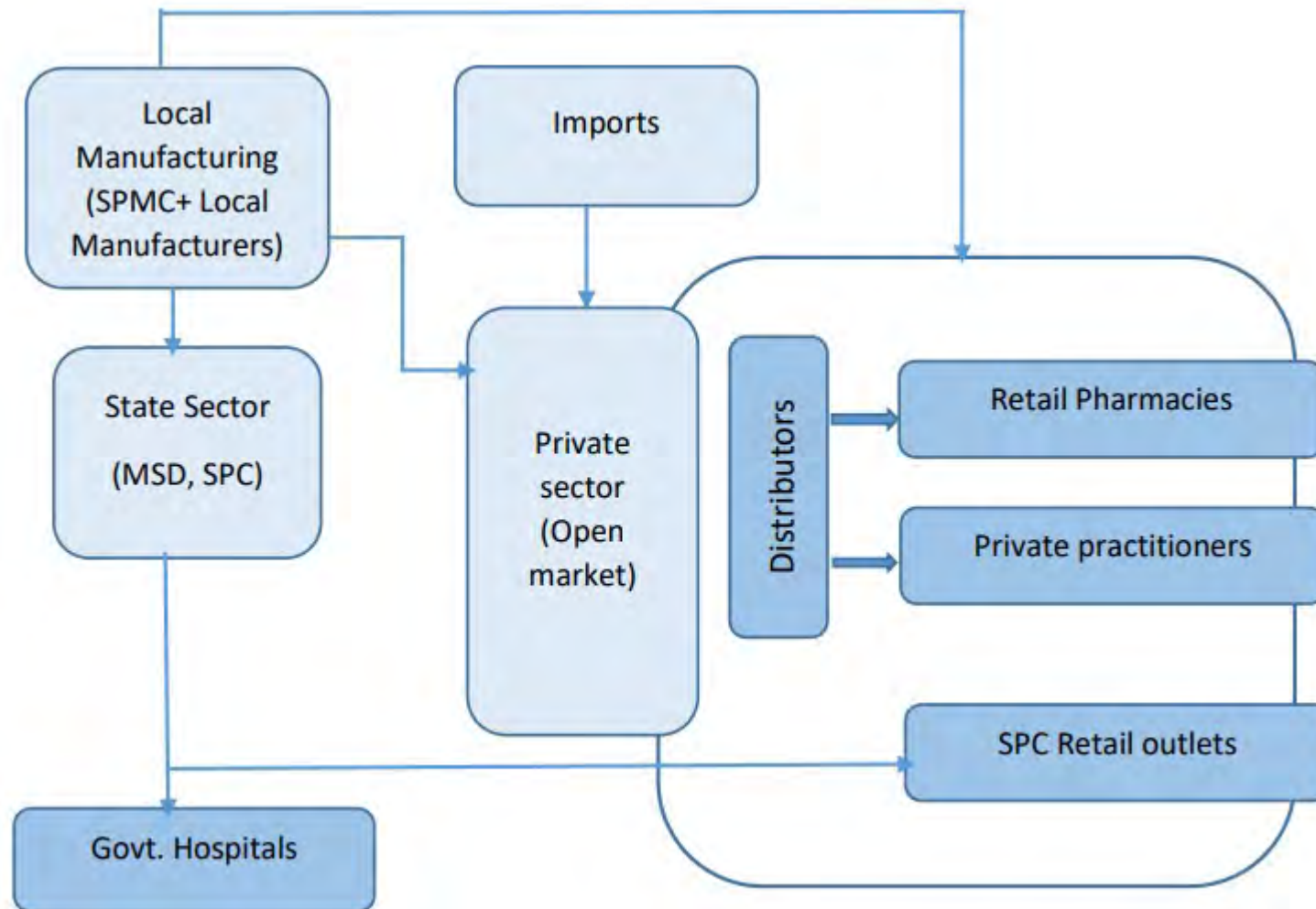
Table 10.2: Retail price trend of leading brands (3-year period)

	Price per unit - LKR			
	Nov-22	Average 21/22	Average 20/21	Average 19/20
Panadol				
500 mg	4.5	2.02	1.44	1.42
120 mg	2.75	1.79	1.79	1.79
Paracetamol				
500 Mg	4	1.72	1.29	1.04
Rapisol				
500 mg	4.16	1.71	1.42	1.43
120 mg	2.75	1.81	1.58	1.58

Table 13.2: Retail price trend of leading brands (3-year period)

	Price per unit - LKR			
	Nov-22	Average 21/22	Average 20/21	Average 19/20
Domperon				
10 Mg	12.77	6.78	5.64	5.64
Motilium				
10 Mg	12.77	6.78	5.64	5.55
Dometic				
10 Mg	12.77	8.15	5.63	5.63

Sri Lanka Association of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics 2023





What Next?

- IMF / WB interventions
- Privatization of SOE
- Proposal to have private wings in public hospitals
- User charges at public hospitals
- Insurance schemes for health
- Brain drain of skilled health workers
- Establishing a purchasing agency