



A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE SELF-CARE PRACTICES AND HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIORS AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE IN SELECTED URBAN AREA.

Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Background of the Study: With increasing life expectancy and declining fertility rates, the elderly population in India is growing rapidly. This demographic shift has heightened the need for understanding their self-care practices and health seeking behaviors. Factors like literacy, income, family support, and social change influence how the elderly manage their health. **Objective of the Study: Primary Objective:** To assess the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors among elderly people in selected urban area. **Secondary Objective:** To find out the association between the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors with their demographic variables. **Material and Method:** A descriptive, cross-sectional study design was adopted. The sample size included elderly individuals selected through non-probability purposive sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. **Result:** Most participants had average scores in self-care and health seeking behaviors. Age, education, and occupation showed significant associations with these variables. **Conclusion:** Based on the finding it was conducted undoubtedly that the written prepared material by the researcher in the form of the subject to improve their self-care practices and health seeking behaviors. self-care practices and health seeking behaviors in urban area found to be effective in improving their practice of subjects. The findings highlight the need for targeted educational interventions to improve the self-care and health seeking behaviors among the elderly population.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Aging brings physiological and psychological changes that demand proactive health behavior. In India, the urban elderly face challenges like economic dependency, lack of family support, and insufficient access to healthcare. This study addresses these issues by evaluating current practices and recommending strategies for improvement. In India, the demographic shift towards an increase in the number of elderly people is the result of an increase in life expectancy combined with a decline in fertility. By 2026, the population's share of seniors is projected to increase from 5.6% in 1961 to 12.4%. From 10.9% in 1961 to 13.1% in 2001, the old age dependency ratio has climbed, and by 2021, it is expected to reach 16.1%.

Background of the Study

The elderly, as one of the most vulnerable populations, face a range of medical, psychological, and social challenges, including chronic illnesses like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, arthritis, and mental health issues. They are also affected by isolation, poverty, abuse, and stigma. Health-seeking behavior refers to the actions individuals take to address perceived illness, shaped by their sociocultural, economic, and demographic contexts. Many elderly individuals often rely on traditional healers, religious leaders, self-medication, or pharmacies rather than seeking formal medical care.

Need of the Study

Rapid urbanization and breakdown of joint family structures leave many elderly individuals vulnerable. Addressing gaps in their self-care knowledge and empowering them with health education is critical for healthy aging. Education level is also strongly correlated with adherence, with greater education levels being associated with better adherence to treatment regimens. In senior individuals, self-care behaviors and social support may also be positively associated. The patient's medical history, including the length of the disease and the prevalence of co-morbidities and complications, is another crucial aspect that affects self-care.

Objective of the Study

Primary Objective

To assess the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors among elderly people in selected urban area.

Secondary Objective

To find out the association between the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors with their demographic variables.

Assumptions

- Participants may possess some awareness of self-care and health seeking practices.
- There may be variations based on socio-demographic characteristics.

- Participants may have increase self-care practices and health seeking behaviors.

Research Hypothesis

This study is a hypothesis generating study hence no hypothesis stated in descriptive survey study.

Limitations

- Study was limited to a selected urban area.
- Generalization is limited due to non-probability sampling.

Inclusion Criteria

- Study subjects present at the time of data collection. (Age above 60 yrs.)
- Study subjects who are willing to participate in the study.
- Study subjects who can understand Marathi, English and Hindi.

Exclusion Criteria

- Subjects who attended any educational program regarding self-care practices and health seeking behaviors.
- Those who are health care professional.

Review of Literature

- Review of literature related to prevalence and incidence of self-care practices and health seeking behavior among elderly people in urban area.
- Review of literature related to self-care practices among elderly people.
- Review of literature related to health seeking behaviors among elderly people.

RESULT

Section A: Distribution of subjects with regards to their demographic variables.

Section B: Assessment of self-care practices and health seeking behaviors among subjects in selected urban area.

Section C: Association of self-care practices and health seeking behaviors among subjects in selected urban area and their demographic variables.

Table: Assessment with Self-care Practices and Health Seeking Behaviors Among Subjects. n = 80

Self-care practices and health seeking behaviors	Score Range	Self-care practices and health seeking behaviors	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Never	0	0	0
Often	1-34	0	0
Sometimes	35-68	23	28.7
Routinely	69-102	57	71.3

Minimum score	52
Maximum score	90
Mean score	73.40 ± 6.64
Mean % Score	71.96 ± 6.51

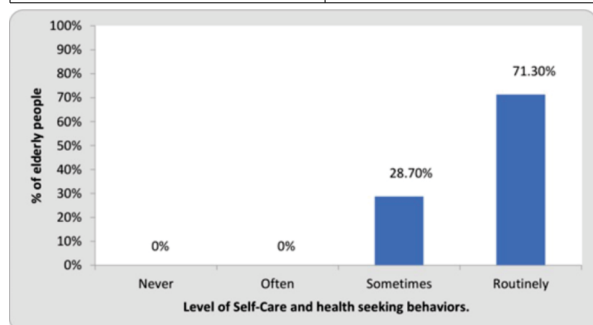


Fig: Assessment with self-care Practices and Health Seeking Behaviors Among Subjects.

DISCUSSION

The present study was undertaken as, “A descriptive study to assess the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors among elderly people in selected urban area”. The main objective of conducting this study is To assess the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors among elderly people in selected urban area, To find out the association between the self-care practices and health seeking behaviors with their demographic variables. In the level of self-care practices and health seeking behaviors score on questionnaire are majority 71.3% of subjects were routinely agreed about self-care practices and health seeking behaviors, 28.7% of elderly people sometime agreed about self-care practices and health seeking behaviors, minimum self-care practices and health seeking behaviors score was 52 and maximum score was 90. Mean self-care and health seeking behavior score was 73.40±6.64 and mean percentage of self-care and health seeking behavior score was 71.96±6.51

CONCLUSION

There is an urgent need to educate the elderly on proper self-care and health seeking behaviors. Community health programs and structured education can substantially improve their quality of life. In the level of self-care practices and health seeking behaviors score on questionnaire are majority 71.3% of subjects were routinely agreed about self-care practices and health seeking behaviors, 28.7% of elderly people sometime agreed about self-care practices and health seeking behaviors.

Additionally study shows association of self-care practices and health seeking behavior score with age in years of elderly people. The tabulated 'n2' values was 7.82 (df=3) which is much higher than the calculated 'n2' i.e. 1.31 at 5% level of significance. Also the calculated 'p'=0.72 which was much higher than the acceptable level of significance i.e. 'p'=0.05. Hence it is interpreted that age in years of elderly people is statistically not associated with their self-care practices and health seeking behaviors score.

Recommendations

1. Formal education programmes should be conducted in all primary health centers, sub centers, anganwadi, high school regarding self-care practices and health seeking behaviors.
2. Study can be replicated on large scale on urban area and on various settings, so that findings can be generalized to a large population.
3. Such studies can be carried out using other teaching strategies like video assisted teaching, computer-assisted instruction on self-care practices and health seeking behaviors.
4. Descriptive studies can be carried on to assess the knowledge regarding self-care practices and health seeking behaviors from selected urban area.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

1. Prior permission has been obtained from the institutional ethics committee.
2. Prior permission has been taken from CO of Municipal Council.
3. Informed written consent has been obtained from the study subjects.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality has been maintained through the study by coding.

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