



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF DEPRESSION AMONG ELDERLY RESIDING IN OLD AGE HOME AT LUCKNOW WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION BOOKLET

Geriatrics

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ABSTRACT

Depression among elderly individuals is an emerging mental health concern, especially among those residing in old age homes. Aging is associated with physical, psychological, and social changes that may increase vulnerability to depression. The present study aimed to assess the level of depression among elderly residing in selected old age homes at Lucknow and to determine the association between depression and selected socio-demographic variables. A quantitative research approach with descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted at Aastha Hospice and Geriatric Care Centre, Lucknow. A total of 100 elderly individuals aged 60 years and above were selected using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured socio-demographic questionnaire and Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-30). The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that 56% of elderly had mild depression, 17% had severe depression, and only 27% were found normal. Significant association was found between level of depression and variables such as age, number of children, and type of family. No significant association was observed with gender, religion, education, source of income, marital status, and medical illness. The study concluded that depression is common among elderly residing in old age homes and early identification along with psychosocial support can improve their quality of life.

KEYWORDS

Depression, Elderly Population, Old Age Home, Geriatric Depression Scale, Mental Health, Aging, Psychosocial Support, Information Booklet

INTRODUCTION

Aging is a natural and irreversible process that begins at conception and continues throughout life. The elderly population is increasing rapidly across the world due to improved health care services and increased life expectancy. In India, individuals aged 60 years and above are considered elderly according to the National Policy for Older Persons. Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders affecting elderly people and is characterized by sadness, loss of interest, disturbed sleep, poor concentration, fatigue, and reduced quality of life.

Depression among elderly often remains unnoticed because symptoms are mistaken as a normal part of aging. Elderly individuals residing in old age homes are at greater risk of depression due to loneliness, social isolation, loss of family support, chronic illness, and emotional insecurity. According to previous studies, depression among elderly in India is higher than the global average and remains hidden due to stigma and lack of awareness.

Mental health care for elderly individuals has become an important public health concern. Early identification of depression and implementation of supportive interventions can significantly improve emotional well-being and quality of life among elderly residents. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the level of depression among elderly residing in old age homes at Lucknow and to develop an information booklet regarding coping strategies for depression.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative research approach with descriptive research design was adopted for the present study. The study was conducted at Aastha Hospice and Geriatric Care Centre, Lucknow. The target population included elderly individuals aged 60 years and above residing in selected old age homes.

The sample size consisted of 100 elderly participants selected through purposive sampling technique. Participants who were willing to participate and present during data collection were included in the study. Elderly individuals suffering from severe mental disorders and those unable to read or write Hindi or English were excluded.

The data collection tool consisted of two sections:

Section A: Socio-demographic variables including age, gender, religion, educational status, marital status, source of income, duration of stay in old age home, medical illness, and family-related variables.

Section B: Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-30), a standardized tool developed by Yesavage et al. for assessing depression among older adults.

The GDS-30 consists of 30 yes/no questions related to depressive

symptoms experienced during the previous week. The scoring pattern was interpreted as follows:

0–9: Normal

10–19: Mild Depression

20–30: Severe Depression

Ethical clearance was obtained from the concerned institutional authorities and written informed consent was taken from all participants before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained throughout the study.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS version 22. Chi-square test was used to determine the association between level of depression and selected socio-demographic variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

LEVEL OF DEPRESSION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NORMAL	27%	27%
MILD DEPRESSION	56%	56%
SEVERE DEPRESSION	17%	17%

The above table shows that the majority of elderly participants had mild depression (56%), followed by severe depression (17%), while 27% were found normal.

Table 2

Association Between Selected Demographic Variables and Level of Depression

VARIABLES	CHI SQUARE VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE
AGE	13.140	SIGNIFICANT
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	29.73	SIGNIFICANT
TYPE OF FAMILY	158.4	SIGNIFICANT
GENDER	22.494	NOT SIGNIFICANT
RELIGION	1.558	NOT SIGNIFICANT

The above table reveals that age, number of children, and type of family had significant association with level of depression among elderly participants.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of participants belonged to the age group of 65–70 years and above 70 years. Among the participants, 59% were male and 41% were female. Most participants were Hindu (91%), widowed (68%), and had degree-level education (41%).

Assessment of depression using the Geriatric Depression Scale

showed that 56% of elderly participants had mild depression, 17% had severe depression, and only 27% were found normal. These findings indicate that depression is highly prevalent among elderly individuals residing in old age homes.

A statistically significant association was found between age and level of depression ($\chi^2 = 13.410$, $p < 0.05$). Elderly individuals aged above 65 years showed higher levels of depression compared to younger elderly participants.

Significant association was also found between number of children and level of depression ($\chi^2 = 29.73$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that elderly individuals with fewer family supports were more vulnerable to depression. Type of family was also significantly associated with depression levels ($\chi^2 = 158.4$, $p < 0.05$). Elderly individuals from nuclear families experienced higher depressive symptoms compared to those from joint families.

No statistically significant association was observed between depression and variables such as gender, religion, education, marital status, previous employment status, source of income, duration of stay in old age home, medical illness, and frequency of relatives visiting.

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research studies that reported higher prevalence of depression among elderly individuals residing in institutional settings. Social isolation, reduced emotional support, loneliness, and dependency are major contributing factors associated with depression among elderly populations.

The study highlights the importance of regular mental health assessment, counseling services, emotional support, and recreational activities in old age homes. Development of awareness programs and information booklets regarding coping strategies can help elderly individuals manage depressive symptoms effectively.

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