



A study on physical health status of elderly widows staying in old age home at Varanasi district

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ABSTRACT

In India, after the independence the population of the elderly people increased very rapidly. There are many factors which are responsible of elderly persons due to improvement in the field of medicine, that factor lowering the death rates and increasing in age that enhance the average time period of life. The population of the old people growing in India, it was 12.1 million in 1901 and it has been recorded 103.2 million in 2011. India ranks 2nd in the Elder's population aspect. In the above context, this pilot study was conducted to understand the general background profile and physiological health status of elderly widows residing in the old age homes of Varanasi. The sample size was selected through "purposive sampling" technique to select 36 elderly widows from the two different old age home in Varanasi district. The data was collected using a specially designed interview schedule and observation method.

INTRODUCTION

The peoples belongs to society, and society is changing very rapidly because the individuals are changing. And this changes influences both physical health and mental health of individuals. The Ageing of the people is an important phenomenon of life. Rapid change in the social, psychological, and physical conditions, let the Elder people (women's) do not settledown. The widows in our society filled with worry, regret stress etc. So that reflects their health status. We born in society, grown up there and become old. The India and china shares major proportion in world's older population and the 62 % of older population lives in developing countries. Day by Day the number of

population (older) is also growing rapidly. So the societies need to have to learn. How to deal with demographic changes of society. The elderly aged person (majority) suffers from the chronic diseases, and disabilities.

The world health organization describes Health as a "State of complete mental, physical, social, environmental well-being and merely the absence of the disease or infirmity".

An old age home is a new concept in India. Generally people go there, who have not a place to survive and thrown out of their homes. An old age home is a place where they get all the facilities to live like food, cloth, medicine and shelter. The behaviour of the younger generations and decline in traditions values forced them to live in an old age homes.

The widowhood is traditionally shows dreaded conditions, it means the lowering status of any women. The widows in northern part of India must abstain from all non-vegetarian food. And they are restricted on a one time meal. They may not be socialized and must not see as any kind of celebration. Because of society thought they bring bad luck in our homes/family or society. Most proportion of the women's comes from the poor homes to an old age homes. And if they have not any children they can't fight back to society.

India is a male dominated country women's at a childhood dependent to their father and at the young age. When they got married they are dependent to their husband. And if the husband passes away they will be dependent to their children. They didn't became empowered by anyone that scenario is also plays a major factors which effects their health status and also the literacy rate of women's is very low in India and sub continents that means they also not aware of their actual health conditions and due to ill literacy rate they don't aware of rehabilitation centers and they don't know their facilities. Only small percentage of widows go there for any kind of help.

The government of India need to have provide some awareness programmes in rural areas for the betterment of widows, and for the betterment of their health status. The widows who goes for their rehabilitation in old age home suffers from many chronic diseases like Alzheimer,

arthritis, cancer, cystic fibrosis and some other kind of age related diseases.

The aging factor have many challenges and if the women's (widows) are not aware of it they can't take their challenges. Many widows are not aware of these factors so they can't take care of themselves. The reaction time and movements also decreases with the increasing age.

Objectives of the study :

– To find out the demographic information, physical health status and their related problems of the widows residing in old age homes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The pilot study was done on 36 widows from two old age home in Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh state for the assessment of physical health conditions of widows related to their ageing. Nature of research work was cross sectional explore study.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 36 widows participated in the study.

The Table 1 shows that socio-demographic profile indicates the most of the old age homes females belongs to 70-80 years (52.77%) and 22.22% was belongs to 60-70 years, either illiterate was (41.66%) or primary class

Socio-demographic details	Widows/respondents		
	Numbers	%	
Age	60-70	08	22.22
	70-80	19	52.77
	80 years and above	09	25.00
Education	Illiterate	15	41.66
	Primary	09	25.00
	Middle	05	13.88
	High School	02	5.55
	Intermediate	04	11.12
	Graduation and PG	01	2.77
Marital Status	Married	-	-
	Unmarried	-	-
	Widow	36	100
	Divorce/separated	-	-
Occupation	House wife	22	61.11
	Pensioner	11	30.55
	Business/other	03	8.33

(25%), all the woman's were widows (100 %) reside in old age homes and they were involved in household work in past occupation (61.11%).

The Table 2 also reveals that the body mass index. Most number of widows (75%) were comes in normal category, (13.88%) widows were overweight and there are less percentage of underweight of (2.78 %).

Table 3 shows that most proportion of the widows within age group of 60 to 70 years have the normal body mass index with 30.55 per cent, following with 70 to 80 age group where 9 out of the 36 widows 25 per cent shows normal body mass index and 2.77 per cent comes in obese. Most number of obese widows were in the age group with the 5.55 per cent .And there in none widow in 60 to 70 age group having overweight body mass index.

Chronic diseases among elderly widows :

The elderly widows were asked as to whether they were suffering or not from any chronic diseases like problems of joints, hypertension, diabetes, cancer etc.

As per the chart suggested there are most number of widows belongs to age group 80 to 90 having joint pains wit 22.22 %, following 70-80 age group with

16.67%, nearly half of the selected widows suffering from chronic diseases like joint pain, arthritis, etc. age related problems with 47.22%.

And 8.33 % of widows which belongs to 60-70 age group suffers from diabetes followed by 90 above age group with 5.55% and 16.66% widows from the total widows suffers from diabilities.70-80 age group is most suffered group from hypertension with 11.12 followed by 80 to 90 with 8.33 % . And finally 22.22% hypertension of the widows of all age group suffers from hypertension and 13.89 % of total widows having cough issue in the age of 90 above. The age group of 80 to 90 having most numbers of chronic diseases which affecting their physiological health with 33.33%.and 60-70 age group widows having least participation in all these diseases with 13.89%. Similar work related to the present investigation was also carried out by Bhushanam *et al.* (2013); Pintu and Gopa (2016); Shamsi *et al.* (2014); Yadav (2014) and www.sodhganga.com.

Conclusion of the study :

The study suggested that older widows have not a financial resources (Lack of financial resources).And

Cut off points(BMI)*	Classification	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
<18.50	Underweight	01	02.78
18.50-24.99	Normal	27	75.00
25.00-29.99	Overweight	05	13.88
>30.00	Obesity	03	8.33
	Total	36	

*source-adapted from WHO (1995); WHO (2000) and WHO (2004)

Age (years)	Underweight* (<18.50)	Normal* (18.50-24.99)	Overweight* (25.00-29.99)	Obesity* (>30.00)
60-70	-	11 (30.55%)		01 (2.77%)
70-80	-	09 (25%)	03 (8.33%)	01 (2.77%)
80 or above	01 (2.77%)	07(19.44%)	01(2.77%)	02 (5.55%)

*source-adapted from WHO (1995); WHO (2000) and WHO (2004)

Age of widows(years)	Chronic diseases				Total
	Joint pains	Diabetes	Hypertension	Whopping cough	
60-70	01(2.78%)	03(8.33%)	-	01(2.78%)	05 (13.89%)
70-80	06(16.66%)	-	04(11.11%)	01(2.78%)	11 (30.55%)
80-90	08(22.22%)	01(2.78%)	03(8.33%)	-	12 (33.33%)
90 or above	02(5.55%)	02(5.55%)	01(2.78%)	03(8.33%)	08 (22.22%)
Total	17(47.22%)	06 (16.66%)	08 (22.22 %)	05(13.89%)	36

they also don't have regular economic support that directly reflects to their bad health status. And they suffers from many chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, joint pain and many more diseases. After the age passes over 60 body needs more nutrition to survive ,the study of global health and adult health (SAGE) shows that 93.5%. Indian women in this age group have insufficient nutrition intake, so we can say that lack of nutrition make them to suffer from heart diseases, lung diseases, visual hearing and impairment, dementia, osteo-arthritis like chronic diseases. About one third of the elderly suffers from two or more chronic ailments simultaneously.

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