

DEPRESSION AMONG GERIATRIC PEOPLE IN RURAL SETTING IN ALIGARH

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ABSTRACT **Introduction** Depression is a medical problem that is commonly seen among geriatric people. It is a serious mental illness that needs to be treated, otherwise it could lead to suicidal tendency. The prevalence of depressive disorders in old population in India varies between 13% and 25%. It is observed that those who are divorced or separated are more likely to be depressed than those who are married. A study indicated that the elderly in rural areas expressed more need for health services than in urban areas. The aim of the study was to find out the prevalence of depression among geriatric people. **Material and Methods** A cross-sectional study was conducted during September-October in 2009, in the rural areas of Aligarh. A door to door survey was done and people more than or equal to 60 years were selected. A total of 100 persons were taken. Informed consent was taken from each participant. Questionnaires were prepared for the study. Data was collected and analysed using SPSS software. The persons were assessed face to face for depression using the long Form Geriatric Depression Scale. **Results** Out of 100 geriatrics under study, 64 were in the age group 60-69 years, 29 were in the age group 70-79 years and 7 were in age group more than or equal to 80 years. Then 79 were financially dependent (mostly on their children) and 21 were financially independent. Out of 100 people under study, 83 were living in joint family and 17 in nuclear family. 81 were married and 19 were either single/widowed/divorced. Out of 100 geriatrics under study, 23 were suffering from depression. And out of 23 people, 17 were males and 6 were females. **Conclusion** The healthcare professionals should take proper interventions to overcome the depression in geriatric population. There should be geriatric clinics in the centres. The government should spend money on geriatric clubs and other sources of entertainment for them. Family members should take care of old people at home. The associated morbidities in the geriatrics should be reduced and managed.

Key Words: Depression, old age, factors

Introduction

Depression is a medical problem that is commonly seen among geriatric people. It is a serious mental illness that needs to be treated, otherwise it could lead to suicidal tendency (1). The prevalence of depressive disorders in old population in India varies between 13% and 25% (2,3). The population of geriatrics constitute 7.4% of India, according to Census 2011 (4). Health and social services utilization is seen to be more closely related to psychological well-being than to demographic characteristics (5,6). It is observed that those who are divorced or separated are more likely to be depressed than those who are married (7). Under-recognition and under-treatment of depression in elderly is reported even in the developed countries (8,9,10). A study

indicated that the elderly in rural areas expressed more need for health services than in urban areas(11).

The aim of the study was to find out the prevalence of depression among geriatric people.

Material and Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted during September-October in 2009, in the rural areas of Aligarh. A door to door survey was done and people more than or equal to 60 years were selected. A total of 100 persons were taken. Informed consent was taken from each participant. Questionnaires were prepared for the study. Data was collected and analysed using SPSS software. The persons were assessed face to face for depression using the long Form Geriatric Depression Scale(12). It consists of brief questionnaire in which the participants were asked to respond to the 30 questions by answering yes or no. Scores of 0-9 are considered as normal, 10-19 indicates mild depression and 20-30 indicates severe depression.

Results

TABLE-1

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF OLDER PEOPLE(n=100)

AGE-GROUP(years)	No.
60-69	64
70-79	29
>=80	7

FINANCIAL STATUS	
FINANCIAL DEPENDENT	79
FINANCIAL INDEPENDENT	21
TYPE OF FAMILY	
JOINT	83
NUCLEAR	17
MARITAL STATUS	
MARRIED	81
SINGLE/WIDOWED/DIVORCED	19

TABLE-2

DISTRIBUTION OF OLDER PEOPLE BASED ON GERIATRIC DEPRESSION SCALE SCORE(n=100)

GDS SCORE	No.
NORMAL	77
MILD	21
SEVERE	2

TABLE-3

DISTRIBUTION OF DEPRESSED OLDER PEOPLE BASED ON SEX

(No. of total depressed old age=23 out of 100 subjects)

SEX	NO.
MALE	17
FEMALE	6

As shown in table-1, out of 100 geriatrics under study, 64 were in the age group 60-69 years, 29 were in the age group 70-79 years and 7 were in age group more than or equal to 80 years. Then 79 were financially dependent (mostly on their children) and 21 were financially independent (engaged in either agricultural work or having own shop or some small scale business. 3 were receiving pension). Out of 100 people under study, 83 were living in joint family and 17 in nuclear family. 81 were married and 19 were either single/widowed/divorced.

As shown in table-2, out of 100 geriatrics under study, 23 were suffering from depression. And out of 23 people, 17 were males and 6 were females.

Discussion

In our study, out of 100 geriatrics, 64 were in the age group 60-69 years, 29 were in the age group 70-79 years and 7 were in age group more than or equal to 80 years. Then 79 were financially dependent (mostly on their children) and 21 were financially independent (engaged in either agricultural work or having own shop or some small scale business. 3 were receiving pension). Out of 100 people under study, 83 were living in joint family and 17 in nuclear family. 81 were married and 19 were either single/widowed/divorced. Out of 100 geriatrics under study, 23 were suffering from depression. And out of 23 people, 17 were males and 6 were females.

The causes of depression in elderly might be because of lack of financial security or loss of life partner or living in the nuclear families.

A lot of studies have been conducted on depression in elderly(13,14,15,16,17).Tiwari et al (13)found most common psychiatric morbidity pattern consisted of depression.A study in Tamil Nadu (18)reported 44% depression in elderly people.Sanjay et al(19) reported 36% depression.Nair et al(20) reported 32.4% depression in elderly population.A study in Surat (21) reported depression of 39% .

Sati (22) reported that 30.1% of respondents above 55 years old felt that they were unwell.

There are several studies conducted (23,24) that show higher risks of depression among the single elderly.Married life and having a spouse as a life partner provided a feeling of safety,being secured and lively.

In our study ,males are more in number than females in case of depression.But other studies showed (25) more stress in female elderly than male elderly.

Unemployment is associated with low family income which is associated with depression(26).

Conclusion

The healthcare professionals should take proper interventions to overcome the depression in geriatric population.There should be geriatric clinics in the centres.The government should spend money on geriatric clubs and other sources of entertainment for them.Family members should take care of old people at home.The associated morbidities in the geriatrics should be reduced and managed.

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