

A study of depression in the geriatric population of India

Introduction

- Depression is the most common mental health problem in the elderly.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report, patients over 55 years with depression have a **four times** higher death rate than those without depression
- This adds severe burden on the patient, also affecting their families and their financial situation.
- Still, it is usually **less understood and largely ignored**
- Therefore it was utterly important to research and study prevalence of depression among older adults living in old age home and community and highlight the impetus we should give on mental health care.
- The results of this study will help the entire health care community to understand **severity** of depression in geriatric group of population, find the **main factors** associated with it and help with **intervention** of the linkage

Further, the association with chosen demographic factors was studied and it showed a positive association between depression and - gender, educational status, chronic illness and marital status. The results are indicated in the table.

Variable	Depression		Chi-Square Value	p-value	Association	
	Non-Depressed	Depressed				
Gender	Female	38	41	13.804	0.0002029	Yes ✓
	Male	62	19			
Educational Status	Illiterate	7	4	11.941	0.008	Yes ✓
	Primary	31	33			
	Secondary	22	13			
Chronic Illness	Graduate	40	10	5.854	0.0155	Yes ✓
	Present	72	53			
Marital Status	Absent	28	7	9.62	0.047	Yes ✓
	Divorced	1	2			
	Married	23	55			
	Unmarried	2	3			
	Widow	24	18			
Widower	10	22				

Objectives



Methodology

01

A cross section study of the geriatric population (160) was performed, two sections of were taken for the study-geriatric population residing in an **old age home** (80) and geriatric population residing in a **community** (80).

02

After a informed verbal consent, there were two forms used for data collection - a **Geriatric Depression Scale** (GDS), a standardised tool used to assess the level of depression and a **demographic form** was used to collect the demographic information

03

To find the association between different factors, the statistical method of **Chi-square test** and **P-value** was taken. A null hypothesis was formed with no association taken into consideration and Chi-square values and P-value was calculated to find the possible association between the decided factors. The confidence interval taken for P-value is **95% with 0.05 level of significance**

Discussion

- In this study, depression was found prevalent in both the community and the old age home but depression was found more in the old age home than in the community.
- It could be due to multiple reasons- **isolation** from the family, **financial** instability, **loneliness** etc.
- Depression affects a significant population of the elderly. It is generally estimated that approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental disorder.
- The most common neuropsychiatric disorders in this age group are dementia and depression.
- Depression in the elderly is associated with functional decline that can require increased care or placement in a facility, family stress, a higher likelihood of co-morbid physical illnesses, reduced recovery from illness (e.g., stroke), and premature death due to suicide.
- Our study has also found following factors associated with depression- **gender**, **educational status**, **chronic illness** and **marital status**.
- **This study has highlighted geriatric depression and the dire need to focus our attention on alleviating the same.**

Results

The study included 180 old age citizens, in which 45% in the old age home were found depressed while, in the community 30% reported depression.

Variable	Depressed	Not depressed	Total
Old age home	36(45%)	44(55%)	80
Community	24 (30%)	56(70%)	80

Conclusion

This study has helped in acknowledging depression faced by elderly population. While, the covid-19 pandemic has shifted our focus on keeping our elderly safe from the virus, it has shifted everyone's focus from their mental health even more, but mental well being is just as important as the physical health and therefore, it should be given more attention and prompt treatment.