A study of depression in the geriatric population of India

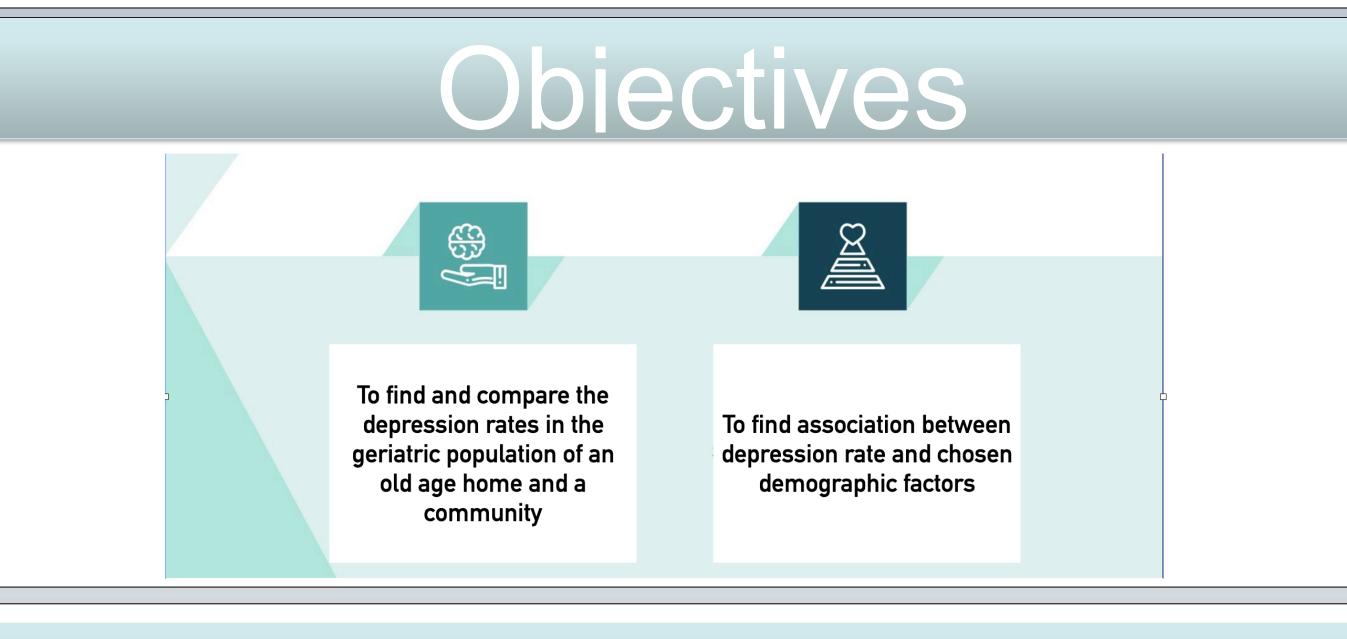
Introduction

- > 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.

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		
		Non-Depressed	Depressed	Value	p-value	Association
Gender	Female	38	41	13.804	0.0002029	Yes
	Male	62	19			
Educational Status	Illiterate	7	4	11.941	0.009	Yes
	Primary	31	33			
	Secondary	22	13		0.008	
	Graduate	40	10			
Chronic Illness	Present	72	53	5.854	0.0155	Yes 🗸
	Absent	28	7			
Marital Status	Divorced	1	2		0.047	Yes 🗸
	Married	23	55			
	Unmarried	2	3	9.62		
	Widow	24	18			
	Widower	10	22			

- 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



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.

Methodology

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

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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

To find the association between different factors, the statistical method of Chi-square test and Pvalue 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

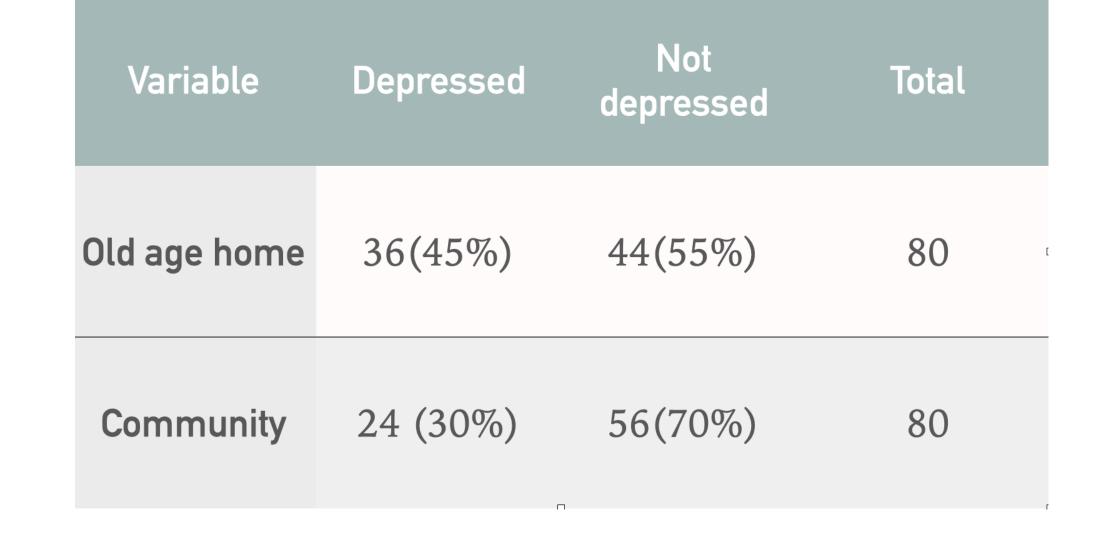
- ► The most common neuropsychiatric disorders in this age group are dementia and depression.
- Depression in the elderly is associated with functional decline that can require increased care or placement in a facility, family stress, a higher likelihood of co-morbid physical illnesses, reduced recovery 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.

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.