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A Study of Socio-Economic conditions and Health problems of Retired people – With Reference to District Hathras (U.P)

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Abstract

Elderly people are vulnerable to various health disorders due to old age and the complications associated with it. With aging, the body's capacity to ward off diseases gradually declines that put elderly at a risk of developing health related complications. Old age brings whirlwind of emotions which can lead the elderly to face anxiety and depressive issues. Old age often brings acceptance that things are the way they are and often cannot be changed. The passing of loved ones puts mental and emotional strain on their minds. Feeling disheartened and emotionally broken can further increase the spiral of negative toxic thoughts which make them susceptible of developing various psychological disorders. The study was done to study the socio-economic conditions and health problems of retired people in District Hathras (U.P). The data was collected using purposive random sampling method and interview schedule method. Results show that majority of retired people were suffering from hypertension followed by diabetes and visual/hearing impairment. 21.6 percent of retired people had psychological disorders of which depression was found to be the most common disorder.

Keywords - Elderly, Health problems, Psychological Disorders, Aged.

Introduction

Aging is a natural process which is associated with changes in body whether it is decreased ability to fight off diseases or its ability to work perfectly. Often diseases related to age related physiological changes are common in the elderly population. The heart problems can often arise in old age due to the hardening of arteries which can create problems with the heart and its functioning. The bones and muscles tend to lose strength in old age and increase the risk of falls or fracture. The functioning of digestive system is also affected by old age and changes in dietary habits whether it is related to intake of less fluids or feeling less hungry which can impact overall health of the body. Equally important is the decrease in mental capabilities which can often make it hard for elderly to remember even small things and names. Old age is accompanied by various life threatening physical and psychological problems and disorders. The illnesses and diseases can be chronic or acute. Acute illness are short term and usually gets treated in a short span of time with right medicines and treatment while chronic illnesses last for a longer time and the patient has to take the treatment for many years. As the body becomes weak and fragile in old age, it picks up various diseases as the immunity system becomes weak and its power to defend the body against diseases gradually declines with age and body becomes susceptible to various illnesses and infections.

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Also various psychological issues also become common in elderly people. Psychological issues can make a person more vulnerable to other health complications. A person who is suffering from psychological disorder is at risk of developing various ailments. Research has found psychological issues like depression and anxiety to be associated with asthma and heart disease respectively (Kang, 2017). Severe psychological disorders such as depression can manifest in severe cardiovascular complications and also puts a person at a risk of mortality (Hare,2014) and developing coronary heart diseases (Davidson, 2012) and also contributes to adverse outcomes in patients who have heart disease (Whooley,2008), (Gan,2014). Several factors can be responsible for psychological disorders in elderly and research point towards the problems associated with old age like disability and constraints that aging brings acts as significant factor in development of psychological disorders in elderly. Problems like restricted daily activities and self critical thinking contributes to problems like depression in elderly (Fiske, 2009). The present study was done to understand socio-economic conditions of retired people and health problems of retired people.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of Retired people.
2. To study the health problems of Retired people under study.

Methodology

To understand the socio economic conditions of the retired people and health problems of the retired people under study, the data was collected from district treasury office in District Hathras (U.P) where the retired people were registered for receiving pension of various categories. The data was collected using purposive random sampling method in which 200 male retired people were selected and using interview schedule the data was collected to study the socio-economic conditions of retired people and the health problems that they are facing. They were also asked about the particular health problem that they were facing, duration of their disease and their treatment seeking behavior. Inferences were drawn from data analysis of the answers given by the respondents regarding their health problems.

Results

Table 1

Age distribution of the Respondents

Age distribution of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
60-69 years	102	51
70-79 years	40	20
80 years and Above	58	29
Total	200	100

Source- Primary data collected from Fieldwork

As depicted in Table 1, 51 percent of the retired people belonged to 60-69 age group while 20 percent belonged to 70-79 age group and 29 percent of the retired people were 80 years and above. Majority of the retired people were of 60-69 years.

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Table 2

Distribution of respondents according to their Marital status

Marital Status of Retirees	Number of Retirees	Percentage
Married	120	60
Single	28	14
Seperated/Divorced	12	6
Widower	40	20
Total	200	100

Source- Primary data collected from Fieldwork

As shown in Table 2, 60 percent of the retired people were married while 14 percent of the retired people were single, six percent of the retired people have separated from their spouse or were divorced and 20 percent were widower.

Income of Respondents

Majority of the retired people (55 percent) belonged to 40000-60000 income category (110 out of 200) in terms of monthly income. 5 percent of the retired people were below 20000 category, 24 percent of the retired people in 20000- 40000 category while 16 percent had income above 60000. Majority of the retired people perceived themselves as financially good.

Table 3

Distribution of respondents according to their Living arrangement

Living arrangement of the respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Living with Spouse only	102	51
Living with Spouse and Children	62	31
Living Alone	16	8
Other arrangement	20	10
Total	200	100

Source- Primary Data collected from Fieldwork

To understand the living arrangement of the retired people, the living arrangement was divided into living with spouse only, living with spouse and children, living alone or some other arrangement. As illustrated in table 3, 51 percent of the retired people reported living with their spouse only while 31 percent of the retired people were living with their spouse and children while 8 percent of the retired people were living alone. Not being burden on their children, and choosing to living life independently without any assistance was the main reason cited for living alone by the retired people.

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Table 4

Health Problems of the Respondents

Health Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	180	90
No	20	10
Total	200	100

Source- Primary data collected from Fieldwork

As revealed by Table 4, in the present study, 180 respondents were suffering from health problems while 20 retired people were in perfectly good health and reported not to be suffering from any health ailments. As old age often leads the body to develop various complications due to decrease immunological functions and disruption in body's metabolism due to increasing age, health complications develop in old age. Majority of the retired people were suffering from health problems (90 percent).

Table 5

Distribution of respondents according to Health problems they are suffering

Health Problems of Retired People	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Hypertension	165	91.6
Respiratory Diseases	46	25.5
Diabetes	121	67.2
Osteoporosis	31	17.2
Arthritis	61	33.8
Psychological Problems	39	21.6
Vision / Hearing Impairment	80	44.4
Constipation	46	25.5
Other Health Problems	26	14.4

*multiple responses

Source- Primary data collected from fieldwork

As revealed in table 5, majority of the retired people had hypertension (91.6 percent) which is related to constantly elevated high blood pressure which can create complications like coronary artery disease and strokes etc which can be fatal. and 67.2 percent of the respondents were suffering from diabetes, a complication related with elevated blood glucose levels which can cause complications related to kidney damage, nerve damage etc followed by 44.4 percent of retired people had vision and hearing impairment and 33.8 percent of retired people were suffering from arthritis, a problem affecting the joints which includes symptoms of severe pain and inflammation in the joints which can cause stiffness and reduced motion in the joints and 17.2 percent had osteoporosis which can put elderly people at a risk of various fractures as it results in fragility of bones. 25.5 percent of the retired people were suffering from constipation. According to the present study, hypertension, diabetes and visual/hearing impairment were main health disorders in retired people under study.

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Table 6

Distribution of respondents according to psychological Problems they are suffering

Psychological Problems of Retired People	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Depression	21	53.8
Anxiety Related Disorders	4	10.3
Amnesia	3	7.7
Dementia	5	12.8
Alzheimer	4	10.3
Other Problems	2	5.1
Total	39	100

Source- Primary data collected from fieldwork

Out of the retired people who were suffering from health disorders, 21.6 percent of retired people were suffering from psychological disorders. When asked about the specific psychological problems they were suffering (table-6) 53.8 percent said that they were suffering from depression while 10.3 percent had anxiety related disorders, 7.7 percent had amnesia memory or related problems while 12.8 percent had dementia, a syndrome associated with decline in thinking, behavior and ability to perform day to day activities. 10.3 percent had Alzheimer which is related with the degeneration of brain cells leading to disruptions in mental thinking.

Table 7

Distribution of respondents according to duration of suffering from health problems

Duration of Health Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 year	56	31.1
1-2 years	60	33.3
2-3 years	16	8.9
More than 3 years	48	26.7
Total	180	100

Source-Primary data collected from Fieldwork

As illustrated in table 7, 31.1 percent of the retired people suffering from health problems had them for less than 1 year while 33.3 percent retired people had them for 1-2 years and 8.9 percent for 2-3 years and 26.7 percent of the retired people were suffering from heath problems for more than 3 years shows that majority of retired people were suffering from health complications for more than 1 year.

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Table 8

Distribution of respondents according to treatment seeking behavior of Respondents

Type of Treatment	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Allopathic treatment	90	50
Homeopathic treatment	32	17.8
Ayurvedic treatment	38	21.1
Other types	20	11.1
Total	180	100

Source- Primary data collected from fieldwork

As revealed in table 8, most of the retired people (50 percent) were dependent on allopathic treatment (modern medicine) for their treatment as they give relief or suppresses symptoms of diseases quickly on administration but traditional treatment methods as ayurvedic (21.1 percent) and homeopathic (17.8 percent) were also being used by retired people to treat diseases.

Conclusion

In the present study, majority of the retired people belonged to 60-69 age group, 60 percent were married with spouse living and majority were found to be financially good. 51 percent retired people were living with their spouse only, 31 percent living with their spouse and children and 8 percent were living alone. Hypertension was found in majority of the retired people followed by Diabetes and Visual/Hearing Impairment. Depressive disorder was the most common disorder in retired people who were suffering from psychological disorders. Most of the retired people were suffering from health problems for more than one year and allopathic treatment was the most preferred treatment for diseases.

With already weakened immune system due to old age, various physical and psychological makes people of old age vulnerable to various diseases and metabolic disorders. Encouraging them to remain healthy and take the right amount of supplements and nutrients which are beneficial for them is crucial. Maintaining a healthy routine everyday will go a long way in ensuring a fit and healthy mind and body in old age as inactivity is often associated with increased risk of developing various lifestyle disorders. Further, exercising is believed to be helpful in reducing the level of toxins in the body and elevate mood and depression being a mood disorder can be relieved by engaging in daily exercise as physical activity has shown to be significantly helpful in depressive disorders (Blake, 2009) and improves mental health (Tordeurs, 2011) and is recognized as treatment for depression (Searle,2011) which helps not only in elevating mood but also helpful in improving immunological functions. WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic workout for elderly in one week who are 65 years or older (WHO, 2010) which will be helpful in elderly living a healthy life free from health related complications.

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