

A Community Based Study of the Morbidity Profile among the Elderly in Chandigarh, India

HM Swami, MD*

Vikas Bhatia, MBBS**
SPS Bhatia****

Rekha Dutt, MBBS***

Objective: To study the morbidity pattern of the elderly and to assess the treatment modalities.

Study Design: Community based, House to House, Cross sectional, Sample size selected by stratified random technique. Urban areas of Chandigarh.

Subjects: Three hundred and sixty two persons aged 65 years and above, 313 from urban and 49 from rural area.

Results: Among 362 elderly registered in the study, 153 were males and 209 were females. A large number of the subjects (89%) were suffering from at least one medical problem. Morbidity among rural subjects was observed to be less when compared to urban subjects. Females had higher rate of morbidity. Common presenting symptoms were pain/ swelling of joints (36.5%), limitation of movements (20.2%), indigestion/ heartburn (17.7%), backache (17.4%) and excessive tiredness. Medical history and physical examination by the physician revealed that most common diseases in order of the magnitude were hypertension (58%), osteoarthritis (50.55%), cataract (18.51%), gastritis (17.67%), deafness (13.53%) and diabetes mellitus/ hyperglycemia (12.15%). Anaemia (estimated by Haemoglobin estimation below 12 gm%) was recorded in 68.2% of the subjects. Study also observed that elderly with ailments were taking treatment in 68% of the conditions.

Conclusion: The study has highlighted the high prevalence of morbidity among elderly. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop geriatric health care services in developing countries on the basis of existing morbidity profile.

Bahrain Med Bull 2002;24(1):13-16.