

Original Research Article

A sociodemographic profile of inmates of an old age home in North Maharashtra

Rambadan Phoolchand Chauhan^{1*}, Sunil Vitthalrao Patil²

Department of Community Medicine, ¹BKL Walawalkar Rural Medical College, Sawarde, Chiplun, Ratnagiri, ²MVP's Dr Vasanttrao Pawar Medical college. Hospital and research Centre, Nashik, Maharashtra, India

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*Correspondence:

Dr. Rambadan Phoolchand Chauhan,
E-mail: rpcfime@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: India had about 8.6 crores elderly above 65 years in 2016. It is expected to increase to 17.9 crores by 2031 and 30.1 crores by 2051. This will increase the demand for health and other social security services. Hence, we decided to collect and analyze socio-demographic profile of inmates of an old age home (OAH).

Methods: Cross sectional study was conducted at an old age home in North Maharashtra from 15th March 2008 to 30th April 2008 by questionnaires/interviews. Sample size was 100%.

Results: There were total 40 inmates. 50% were aged 50-60 years. 27.5% (60-70 years), 17.5% (70-80 years) and 5% (80-90 years). Males were 52.5%, female- 47.5%. married- 50%, widow- 45% and unmarried- 5%. 30% were housewives, 27.5 % were labourers, 20% were businessmen, 10% were in government jobs, 7.5% were teachers and 5% were farmers. 40% inmates were childless, >4 children- 25%, 3 children- 17.5%, 2 children- 12.5% and 1 child- 5%. 33 inmates' children were literate while 7 inmates' children were illiterate. Main causes of staying at OAH were family problems 50%, personal cause 45% and economical cause was 5%. Major health problems were locomotor disorder- 52.5%, cataract- 47.5%, hypertension- 17.5%, diabetes- 15%, genito-urinary problem- 7.5%, decreased hearing- 7.5%, IHD- 5% and respiratory problems- 2.5%. Dental health/problems included missing teeth- 65%, caries- 25%, discoloration- 22.5% and dentures- 20%. Literacy was 70%.

Conclusions: Major medical/dental/social problems were locomotor, cataract, diabetes-mellitus, hypertension, tooth loss, caries, family disputes, poverty and childlessness.

Keywords: Old age home, Inmates, Socio-demographic status

INTRODUCTION

India is second largest country in the world with about 8.6 crores elderly above 65 years of age in the year mid-2016.¹ It is expected to increase to 17.9 crore by 2031 and 30.1 crore by 2051.² This will increase the demand for health services, pension and other social security services. Population explosion is India's biggest problem. It is the mother of the most of the evils of India. The evil has many dimensions like physical, antisocial, psychological, social etc.³ Indian population doubled in 40 years (55 crores in 1971 to 121 crores in 2011).⁴

Almost explosive annual growth rate of 2 (during 1971-2011).^{5,6} Population explosion nullifies the development made by the country due to increased demand for more jobs, more food, more houses etc. In the ever demanding day to day needs and stresses at social, economic, professional and personal life, many people have very little time for the aged.⁷ This has led to increased number of home for the aged. According to the survey conducted by the Madras Institute of Ageing, there were 529 old age homes in India in 1995.⁸ Helpage India has reported that there were 1279 old age homes in 2017.⁹ With this background, I decided to collect and analyze socio-

demographic profile of inmates of an old age home for better understanding and solution for the same, if any.

Objective of study

- To collect and analyze socio-demographic profile of inmates of an old age home.
- To know the cause of admission in old age home.

METHODS

Study period: March 15 to April 30, 2008.

Study design: It is observational-descriptive-cross sectional study.

Place of study: Home for aged, on Sakri Road, Dhule.

Sample size: 100%. All inmates were involved in the study.

Institutional ethical committee’s permission was sought. Written permission was sought from the OAH manager and inmates. A history taking proforma and a questionnaire were designed. All inmates were interviewed. Information about sickness was collected by history, case records. Some information was also collected from OAH records such as date of admission, age, gender, brought by person; home address etc. OAH manager also provided valuable information about some inmates. As per him, 1 inmate was found begging after being strayed by his family. The OAH manager persuaded him to get admitted in the OAH.

Data collection

A history taking proforma and a questionnaire were designed. The inmates were interviewed after taking written permission from the OAH manager and also after written permission from the inmates. Data collection was done by interviews and records.

Statistical analysis: Collected data has been analyzed and expressed in terms of proportions.

RESULTS

There were total 40 inmates in the old age home. Gender analysis showed that 21 (52.5%) inmates were male and 19 (47.5%) inmates were female. Contrary to the general thinking, majority of the inmates i.e. 35 (87.5%) were comfortable at OAH. Only 5 (17.5%) inmates preferred to be at their own home. All the inmates were Hindus, though the old age home was open to all religions.

Table 1 shows that there were total 40 inmates. Age ranged from 50-90 years. Distribution of the age groups illustrates that 20 (50%) were aged 50-60 years, 11 (27.5%) were aged 60-70 years, 5 (17.5%) were aged 70-80 years and 2 (5%) were aged 80-90 years. Table 2

shows that married inmates were 20 (50%), widow inmates were 18 (45%) and unmarried inmates 2 (5%).

Table 1: Age wise distribution of the inmates.

Age group (in years)	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
50-60	20	50
60-70	11	27.5
70-80	7	17.5
80-90	2	5
Total	40	100

Table 2: Marital status of the inmates.

Married status	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Married	20	50
Unmarried	02	5
Widow	18	45
Total	40	100

As per Table 3, regarding inmates past occupations, 12 (30%) were housewives, 11 (27.5%) were labourers, 8 (20%) were in business, 4 (10%) were in government jobs, 3 (7.5%) were teachers and 2 (5%) were farmers.

Table 3: Occupation analysis of inmates.

Occupation	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Housewives	12	30
Labourers	11	27.5
Business	8	20
Government Job	4	10
Teacher	3	7.5
Farmers	2	5
Total	40	100

Table 4 shows that 31 (77.5%) inmates belonged to nuclear families and 9 (22.5%) inmates belonged to joint family. Thus it is evident that old age home is also a byproduct of increasing urbanization and modernization.⁷ Both husband and wife working outside and nobody to look after the dependent old people.

Table 4: Types of family of the inmates.

Family type	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Joint	09	22.5
Nuclear family/single	31	77.5
Total	40	100

Table 5 shows personal characteristics of inmates based on number of children. It shows that 16 (40%) inmates

were childless, 10 (25%) inmates had 4 and more children, 7 (17.5%) of them had 3 children, 5 (12.5%) were having 2 children and 2 (5%) inmates had only 1 child. 'Childless' may be one reason for 16 inmates to be in home for aged.

Table 5: Classification of the inmates based on the number of children.

Number of children	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	2	5
2	5	12.5
3	7	17.5
4 and more	10	25
None	16	40
Total	40	100

Table 6 shows that 21 (52.50%) inmates suffered locomotor problems, 19 (47.5%) had cataract, 7 (17.50%) were suffering from hypertension, 5 (15%) had diabetes, 3(7.5%) had genito-urinary problem, 3 (7.5%) suffered decreased hearing, 2 (5%)- IHD and 1 (2.5%) had respiratory problem. Dental health/problems included missing teeth- 26 (65%), caries- 10 (25%), discoloration- 9 (22.5%) and dentures- 8 (20%).

Table 6: Medical and dental problems of the inmates.

	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Medical problems		
Locomotor disorders	21	52.50
Cataract	19	47.50
Hypertension	7	17.5
Diabetes	5	15
Genito-urinary	3	7.5
Decreased hearing	3	7.5
Ischemic Heart Disease (IHD)	2	5
Respiratory illness	1	2.5
Dental health/problems		
Missing tooth	26	65
Caries	10	25
Discoloration	9	22.5
Dentures	8	20

Table 7 shows the various reasons of admissions to the old age home. 19 (47.50%) inmates got admitted due to family disputes, 18 (45%) were admitted due to personal reasons and 2 were admitted for extreme poverty reasons (beggars). An important finding at the interview of the inmates was that in about 47.50% of the family disputes, some had property dispute. They had parted their property among their sons and daughters. After partition of the property they were left to their fate. Some were due to differences with the daughters-in-law.

Table 7: Analysis of cause of admission to old age home.

Cause of admission to OAH	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Family disputes	20	50
Personal cause	18	45
Economic	2	5
Total	40	100

Table 8: Missing family members (or being nostalgic).

Missing family members	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	60
No	16	40
Total	40	100

Above Table 8 shows that while 24 (60%) missed their family members, 16 (40%) didn't. Majority of these 16 inmates were childless.

Table 9: Frequency of inmates visits to their homes.

Visiting own home	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	14	35
No	26	65
Total	40	100

Above Table 9 shows that 14 (35%) inmates were visiting their homes while 26 (65%) inmates didn't. Table 10 shows that all 14 inmates visited their homes at least once in 6 months.

Table 10: Frequency of visits of 14 inmates who visited their own homes.

Frequency of visits	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Periodically	5	35.71
Festivals	4	28.59
Ceremony	2	14.28
Sometimes	3	21.42
Total	14	100.00

Literacy rate of the children of inmates

33 (82.5%) inmates' children were literate while 7 (17.5%) inmates' children were not literate.

Funds: OAH received some grants from government. Some inmates paid monthly maintenance charges as per OAH norm. For some inmates, it was free. They also accepted donations in forms of cash, grains and kinds.

The accommodation: Three types of accommodations were provided, one cluster was exclusively for single

males, another cluster was exclusively for single females and the third cluster was for couples.

Other important findings

Literacy: 28 (70%) literate and 12 (30%) illiterate. **Habits:** Tobacco-12 (30%), smoking- 3 (7.5%), paan-2 (5%), alcohol-1 (2.5%), others (tapkir snuffing, supari-betel nut)- 3 (7.5%). **Income:** 16 (40%) inmates- no earning member, 24 (60%) inmates- some earning members. **Heights:** Average height males 162.5 cm (range 145-175), average height females 148.4 cm (range 130-162.5). **Weights:** Average weight males 55.5 kg (range 43-74), average weight females 50.5 kg (range 35-65).

DISCUSSION

During this study, we faced one moot point, 'What is the cut off age for old age?' This was relevant to this study to decide the admission age of the inmates. The answer is not unanimous. United Nations has suggested cutoff at 60+ years.¹⁰ As per Thane, on the basis of 'transition in livelihood' the old age starts between 45 and 55 years for females and between 55 and 75 years in males.¹¹ Some people are of opinion is that the old is the age when social security benefits meant for senior citizens, are available to them. In this context, in the Indian Railways, the eligibility for availing of concessions in the basic fares for women is 58 years and above and for men it is 60 years and above.¹² National programme for health care of elderly considers the age at 60 years and above as old age.¹³ Census commissioner of India calculates old age dependency at the age 65 years and above.¹ In this study the age of inmates ranged between 50-90 years.

Rajan et al found following reasons for joining old age homes: no one to take care at home: 67%, children are away: 1%, problems with children: 8%, own preference: 19%, other reasons: 5%.¹⁵ In our study, it was mainly family disputes and personal causes.

As per William et al 'seismic shifts in major social institutions (like family and economy) have created an increased demand for community and government care. For example, the increase in women working outside the home has made it more difficult to provide in-home care to aging parents, leading to an increase in the need for government-supported institutions (Raikhola and Kuroki 2009).'¹⁴ In our study also, 31 (77.5 %) family were nuclear family.

As per Rajan et al "To the question, 'do you like the environment at old age home?', while 82% of the inmates reported that it was alright, 16% answered that they liked the environment very much. Only 1% reported that the environment in old age home was 'bad'."¹⁴ In our study we found that 35 (87.5%) inmates were happy at old age home. 5 (12.5%) preferred to stay at their home. In our study 16 (40%) inmates were childless. Rajan et al found it (childless inmates) 63% in his study.¹⁵

As per William et al, the common morbidities were: arthritis- 65%, hypertension- 40%, and cataract- 28% in Canadian old people.¹⁴ In our study, we found that common problems were dental problems- 26 (65%), locomotor problems 21 (52.5%), cataract 19 (47.5%), hypertension 7 (17.5%) and diabetes mellitus 6 (15%).

CONCLUSION

Total inmates were 40. Major health problems were locomotor disorder- 52.5%, cataract- 47.5%, hypertension- 17.5% and diabetes- 15%. Genito-urinary problems and diminished hearing were present in 3 (7.5%) each, 2 (5%) had IHD and 1 (2.5%) had respiratory problem. Majority of them had dental problems. 65% had missing teeth. Majority (87.5%) were comfortable at old age home. Caries were present in 10 (25%), teeth discoloration was in 9 (22.5%) and 8 (20%) had dentures. Main causes of staying in OAH were family problems (47.5%), personal cause (45%) and economical cause was 5%. Partition of the property among children was one of the important reasons for being in old age home because after partition, parents were deserted to fate.

Recommendations

- Regular health checkup and follow up, dental care, eye care, with provision of medicine, physiotherapy and ambulance service.
- Counselling for health related risk factors, yog, meditation and exercise.
- Provision of indoor games with occasional social gathering.
- A wise person will never part his/her property among his/her children during his/her lifetime. A wise person will plan his/her old age where he/she is not dependent on the children because differences with sons/daughters-in law are not uncommon.

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