

## Original Research Article

# A study to assess the prevalence of common physical health problems among senior citizens at Sarojininagar, Lucknow

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Aging is a universal process. Aging is generally defined as a process of deterioration in the functional capacity of an individual that results from structural changes, with advancement of age. Aging is a normal, inevitable, biological and universal phenomenon, and it affects every individual irrespective of caste, creed, rich and poor. It is the outcome of certain structural and functional changes takes place in the major parts of the body as the life years increases.

**Methods:** A quantitative research approach and a non-experimental descriptive cross sectional research design was used. The sample size of 150 senior citizens was selected by using non-probability purposive sampling technique. Initially the investigator Obtained permission from concerned authority of Sarojininagar, primary health care (PHC), Lucknow. The tools used were, Performa of demographic variables, checklist to screen the history of common physical health problems and checklist to assess the existing common physical health problems of senior citizens.

**Results:** The results of the study revealed that majority of the elders were suffering from vision problem (93.3%), hearing problems (56.0%), hypertension (42.7%), diabetes mellitus (42.7%) and obesity (30.7%).

**Conclusions:** The study concluded that majority of the elders were suffering from one or the other common health problems while only few reported to be completely healthy. There was a need to create awareness regarding the reasons for common physical health problems, to encourage practicing a healthy lifestyle.

**Keywords:** Common physical health problems, Prevalence, Senior citizens and assess

### INTRODUCTION

Aging is a universal process. Aging is generally defined as a process of deterioration in the functional capacity of an individual that results from structural changes with advancement of age.<sup>1</sup> Population aging is a worldwide phenomenon and India is no exception. Demographic transition resulted in increase in life expectancy and increase in proportion of elderly population in India and other developing countries. Indian population has approximately tripled during the last 50 years but the number of elderly Indians has increased more than fourfold. In India the elderly population accounted for 8.2% of the total population in 2011 and the number is expected to increase dramatically over the next four

decades (19% in 2050). The Government of India adopted the National Policy on Older Persons in 'January 1999' and this policy defines 'senior citizen' or 'elderly' as a person who is of age 60 years or above.<sup>1</sup> Aging is a normal, inevitable, biological and universal phenomenon and it affects every individual irrespective of caste, creed, rich and poor. The outcome of aging is certain structural and functional changes in the major parts of the body.<sup>2</sup>

Globally the population aged above 60 years is increasing due to better life expectancy and thereby some of the health problems among them are proportionally increased. To focus the attention of the elder persons the topic of world health day in the year 2012 is "aging and health" with the theme of "good health and life to years". In India the

numbers of elders aged 60 years or more were increased from 5 percent in 1951 to 8.2 percent in 2011. Older persons constitute one of the most vulnerable sections of the society. They are not only physically weak but also lack economic resources and self-esteemed social status. The Common health problems on musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, neurological, endocrinological systems, cataract, hearing difficulties, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Health is an essential component irrespective of all the ages. Old age is not a disease but there is increase in vulnerability to get the diseases related to many psychosociological economic factors. In our country the study on the health problems of the elderly residing in rural areas are sparse. In this context, the present study is an attempt to fill some of the gaps in the study of the elderly population and the existing institutional support available to them. The study was undertaken with the overall goal of estimating the prevalence of common physical health problems and understanding the association with selected socio demographic factors of the elderly residing in Sarajoninagar, Lucknow. Advised for referral services from primary health care (PHC) and V.P.I.M.S for remedial purpose.

### **Objectives**

Objectives of the study were to assess the prevalence of common physical health problems among senior citizens in Sarajoninagar, Lucknow; and to associate the prevalence of common physical health problems among senior citizens with their selected socio demographic variables.

## **METHODS**

### **Research approach**

A quantitative research approach.

### **Research design**

In this study, “descriptive cross sectional research design” was adopted to attain the objectives of the present study.

### **Variables**

#### **Demographic variables**

In this study demographic variables are age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, and religion of the participant, type of family, family habits, hobbies, financial condition, health insurance covered, health seeking and exercise.

#### **Research variable**

In this study prevalence of common physical health problem among senior citizen at Sarajoninagar, Lucknow is research variable.

### **Setting**

Setting of this study was Sarajoninagar, Lucknow.

### **Population**

In this study the accessible population was senior citizens residing at Sarajoninagar, Lucknow.

### **Sampling technique**

In this study “non-probability purposive sampling technique” was used.

### **Sample size**

The investigator selected 150 senior citizens.

### **Inclusion criteria**

In present study, inclusive criteria were: senior citizens who were residents of Sarajoninagar, senior citizens who were age group of 60 years and above in both sex, senior citizens who were available at the time of data collection. 30, senior citizens who were willing to participate in this present study, and senior citizens who can talk and understand Hindi or English.

### **Exclusive criteria**

Exclusive criteria are those characteristics that disqualify subjects from inclusion in the study.

In present study exclusion criteria were: senior citizens who was not willing to participate in the study, senior citizens who were unable to stand properly, and senior citizen who was visitor or guest at Sarajoninagar.

### **Tool**

On the basis of the objectives and conceptual framework of the study, the following instruments were developed to collect data. In this study tool consist of three sections.

#### **Section A- socio demographic variables**

This part consists of socio demographic variables such as: age, gender, marital status, religion, education, occupation, type of family, food habits, hobbies, financial condition, health insurance, health seeking and exercise.

#### **Section B- checklist to screen the history of common physical health problems**

Checklist consisted of five items which contains common physical health problems of senior citizens such as obesity, hypertension, vision problem, hearing problem and diabetics mellitus with duration and whether taking treatment if they have been diagnosed.

**Section C- checklist to assess the common physical health problems of senior citizen**

Checklist consisted of five items which help to find out common physical health problems of senior citizens: item 1- body mass index (BMI) calculation for obesity according to World Health Organization (WHO) classification; item 2- blood pressure monitoring according to American heart association classification; item 3- vision test by Snellen’s chart for both eyes; item 4- hearing test by whisper voice test for both ears; and item 5- Benedict’s test for urine sugar analysis.

**In present the research had taken ethical clearance from:** a written formal permission obtained from research and ethical committee of Vivekananda College of Nursing, Lucknow; written formal permission obtained from the authorities of PHC at Sarojininagar, Lucknow to conducted the study; informed consent obtained from all participants who enrolled for the study; and confidentiality and anonymity of the subject was maintained.

**Data collection**

The study was conducted on 150 senior citizens after obtaining permission from concern authority. The investigator visited each house of senior citizen and consent obtained from them after explaining the purpose of the study.

Interview was conducted to collect the baseline information from senior citizens. Common physical health problems were assessed by a checklist, for duration of three moths from November 2019 to January 2020.

**Statistical analysis**

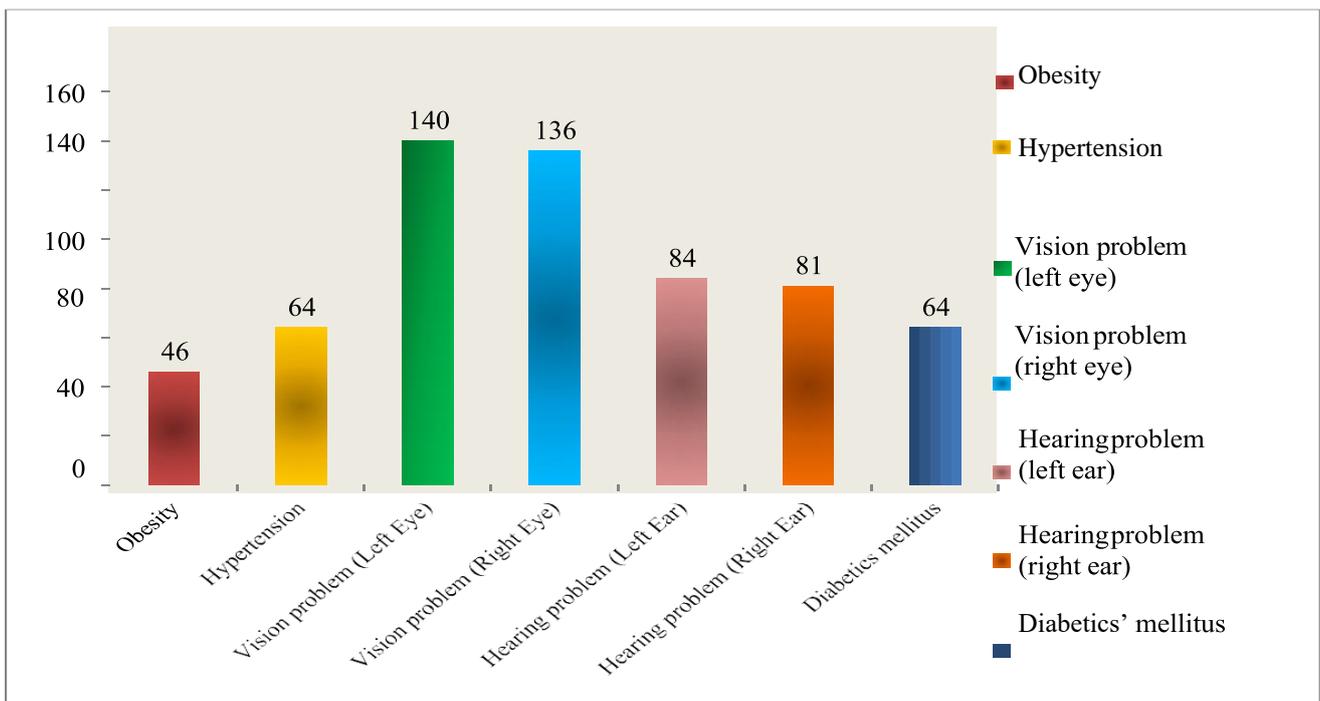
Data entered in Microsoft excel and analysis was carried in statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). Frequency and percentage distribution was used to analyze the socio- demographic variables assess the prevalence of common physical health problems.

The Chi–square values will be used to order the association between prevalence scores and related demographic variables.

**RESULTS**

Prevalence of common physical health problems among elderly. The majority of the elderly 140 (93.3%) had been suffering from vision problems in left side eyes followed by 136 (90.7%) had been a vision problem in right side of the eye, 84 (56.0%) had been suffering from hearing problems in left side of the ear, 81 (54.0%) had been suffering from hearing problems in right side of the ear, 64 (42.7%) subject had been suffering from hypertension and diabetics mellitus and 46 (30.7%) subject had been suffering from obesity.

Figure 1 indicate majority of senior citizens had a vision problem in left eye 140 had been suffering from a vision problems in left side eyes followed by 136 had been vision problem in right side of the eye, 84 had been suffering from hearing problems in the left side of the ear, 81 had been suffering from hearing problem in right side of the ear, 64 subject had been suffering from hypertension and diabetics mellitus and only 46 subject had been suffering from obesity.



**Figure 1: Prevalence of common physical health problems among senior citizens.**

**Table 1: Assessing the common physical health problems of senior citizen (N=150).**

Health problems	Previously diagnosed (N=150) %		Newly detected by researchers	Total number	Prevalence (%)
<b>Obesity</b>	11	7.3	35	46	30.7
<b>Hypertension</b>	53	35.3	11	64	42.7
<b>Vision problem (left eye)</b>	28	18.7	112	140	93.3
<b>Vision problem (right eye)</b>	28	18.7	108	136	90.7
<b>Hearing problem (left ear)</b>	36	24.0	48	84	56.0
<b>Hearing problem (right ear)</b>	36	24.0	45	81	54.0
<b>Diabetics mellitus</b>	31	20.7	33	64	42.7

## DISCUSSION

Change in socio-economic status and various health problems adversely affect an individual's way of life during old age. In old age has been found to have an influence on health status of the subjects as the subjects staying in rural area were found to be less overweight/obese and higher percentage belonged to normal weight category (nutritional status) a study carried out by 150 senior citizens majority of had vision problem, hearing problems and cardiovascular problems.

A cross sectional study on health problems among elderly inmates of old age homes in urban areas of Chennai, India. Simple random technique was used to select 450 elders in 19 old age home. The data were collected using standardized pre tested questionnaire after getting consent from the elders. The diagnosis made by clinical examination and some were confirmed by medical records possessed by the subjects. The Results of this study showed that the prevalence of individual health problems was Visual problems 67% followed by hypertension 54%, depression 45%, arthritis 43%, diabetes mellitus 32% and hearing problems 24%. The overall prevalence of visual impairment and Blind was 46% and 21% respectively. This study concluded that the prevalence of health problems among the inmates of old age homes are high and periodic health check up to identify the morbid conditions at the early stage and adequate treatment will lead them to have better quality of life.

A cross-sectional study on health problems among the elderly. A study was carried out by house to house survey of all people aged over 60 years in an urban slum and a village. The total elderly population was 407, with an almost equal representation from urban slum and rural 14 area. The result of the study suggests that visual impairment was the most common handicap with a prevalence of 83.29%. Uncorrected hearing impairment was also common. Followed with 29.2% had unoperated cataract, prevalence of hypertension was 30.7%; 12% had diabetes; 7.6% gave a history of ischemic heart disease. So the study concludes that vision and hearing problems are more common in elderly

A study on the prevalence of common physical health problems among elderly in selected old age homes of a

cosmopolitan city". A total of 150 elderly was selected from 07 old age homes of Pune by the multi stage sampling method. The findings of the study revealed that 67 (45%) of the inmates were in the age group of 70-79 years. Women outnumbered men. Most of the elderly widow females and males preferring to live in old age homes by 79 (53%) of elderly being financially supported by family members and 37 (25 %) having spent more than 3 years in the old age homes. The most common morbidities found were vision problems affecting 125 (83.3 %), anaemia 73 (48.7 %), hypertension 65 (43.3 %) and diabetes in 61 (40.7 %) of the elderly.

A study on the prevalence of health problems among elderly at a rural population of Varanasi". The objective of the study was to report the prevalence of common age related health problems among elderly people from rural areas of Varanasi district. Health camps were organized in randomly selected twelve villages in a block of Varanasi district in the months of February and March 2007. A total of 728 elderly people aged 60 years and above were included in the study. During the camps, a detailed clinical history was recorded and relevant physical examination was carried out. Parameters like weight, height, abdominal circumference, hip circumference, blood pressure were recorded. The Results of the study shows that osteoarthritis, hypertension and cataract was the most common health problems among the present elderly population attending the health camp. So the study concludes that hypertension, vision problem and joint pain is more common in elderly population

A similar study was conducted by Jaiganesh et al (2013), a cross sectional study on health problems among elderly inmates of old age homes in urban areas of Chennai, India. The objective of this study was to find prevalence of common health problems among inmates of Old age homes. Simple random technique was used to select 450 elders in 19 old age homes during April to December 2012 for eight months. The data were collected using standardized pre-tested questionnaire after getting consent from the elders. The diagnosis made by clinical examination and some were confirmed by medical records possessed by the subjects. The results of this study showed that the prevalence of individual health problems was visual problems 67% followed by hypertension 54%, Depression 45%, arthritis 43%, diabetes mellitus 32% and

hearing problems 24%. The overall prevalence of visual impairment and blind was 46% and 21% respectively. This study concluded that the prevalence of health problems among the inmates of old age homes are high and periodic health check up to identify the morbid conditions at the early stage and adequate treatment will lead them to have better quality of life.

In this study majority of the elders were suffering from one or the other common health problems while only few reported to be completely healthy. The health problems of the elderly people were influenced by age, sex, marital status, educational status, type of family and type of occupation. There was a need to create awareness regarding the reasons for common physical health problems, to encourage practicing a healthy lifestyle.

## CONCLUSION

Health of the elderly is an important issue in today's developing world. The main reason for this concern is the rapid increase in the population of this vulnerable group. A more transparent and accessible health care infrastructure in the urban settings of the country can bring down the rate of morbidity and mortality due to physical health problems which are preventable and treatable to a great extent if detected at the earliest. This will not only improve the health of the elderly but also their quality of life.

## Recommendations

A comparative study can be conducted both in rural and urban community regarding physical health problems of senior citizens. A comparative study can be conducted both in a community setting and old age homes regarding physical health problems of senior citizens. A study can be conducted with large samples.

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*Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee*

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