SHORT ARTICLE

Geriatric depression among the retired elders in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

Background: Retirement makes an impact on the psychological health of elders. Geriatric depression is common among elders and it is a major public health challenge in India. **Aims & Objectives:** To assess the level of Geriatric depression and its relationship with socio demographic factors. **Materials and Methods:** 5 retired associations out of 36 associations located in Madurai district were selected by simple random sampling which has the total members of 1934.As the stratum varies in each association, 64 respondents are selected from each association irrespective of the number of samples by adopting stratified disproportionate sampling method on the basis of the Krejice and Morgan (1970) sample table. Socio demographic details were collected with questionnaire and Geriatric depression was assessed with Geriatric Depression rating scale. **Results:** 28.1 per cent have medium level and 9.1 per cent have high level of Geriatric depression. Female has high level of geriatric depression when compared to male. **Conclusion:** Socio demographic factors of retired elders have a major impact on Geriatric depression and it has to be dealt as public health issue.

Introduction

Geriatric Depression faced by elders is a mood of sadness, feeling lifeless, helpless, hopeless, worthless, empty, apathetic, angry, aggressive and restless which affect the day – to-day activities of elders such as ability to study, sleep, eat, work, and have fun. The factors associated with Geriatric Depression are lack of social support to share the feelings, inadequate ability to adjust with life with shared or no power and authority, financial issues at home, loneliness, high level of medical expenses, neglect and abuse by the family members, death and relocation of friends and relatives, loss of spouse, fear of dying and so on. Retired elders are prone to geriatric depression as it completely affects the routine life pattern, relationship, income etc. Absence of regular job result in decreased psychological, social and physical well-being. Depression is under treated for elders as it is not yet perceived as a priority public health problem in developing countries. (1)

Aims & Objectives

To assess the level of Geriatric depression and its relationship with socio demographic factors.

Material & Methods

A descriptive study was done with 320 respondents. 5 retired associations out of 36 associations located in Madurai district were selected by simple random sampling which has the total members of 1934. As the stratum varies in each association, 64 respondents were selected from each association irrespective of the number of samples by adopting stratified disproportionate sampling method on the basis of the Krejice and Morgan (2) sample table. Socio demographic details of age, sex, year of work experience, current work status, overall monthly income and area of residence were collected with questionnaire and Geriatric depression was assessed with Geriatric Depression rating scale. The study has the inclusion criteria of elders above 60 years retired from Government sector and the exclusion criteria of retired elders between ages of 58 – 60 years.

Statistical Methodology: Data were entered in Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Frequency and percentage were found for all the socio demographic details and the level of geriatric depression was found. Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of correlation was applied to find the relationship between age, years of work experience, monthly income and geriatric depression. 'Z' test was administered to find the significant difference between sex, current work status, area of residence and geriatric depression

Results

(Table 1) 28.1 per cent of the respondents have medium level and 9.1 per cent of the respondents have high level of Geriatric Depression.

(Table 2) There is a significant relationship between age, years of work experience, overall monthly income and Geriatric depression. Female respondents have high level of geriatric depression than male, non-employed respondents have high level of Geriatric depression than employed and respondents reside in rural area have high level of Geriatric Depression than urban residents.

Discussion

Work is central to the lives of most people and it is the source of prestige and respectability for the individual. Retirement socially implies the onset of old age. At the final phase of occupational life, the society expects a man / woman to take rest after a long period of service. Loss of job results in decreased psychological well-being, loss of self-esteem, self-worth that leads to depression. 60 years of age has been adopted by the census of India for the purpose of classifying a person as old. (3) Depression is a common disorder in old age caused by biological, physical, psychological and social factors. (4)

In this study, 28.1 per cent of the respondents have medium level of depression as they are depressed due to emotional problems like children are not living with them, problem with spouse and problem in adjustment with new pattern of life. 9.1 per cent of the respondents have high level of Geriatric Depression mainly due to poor physical health, dependency on others and loneliness due to death of spouse and friends. The Indian elderly population has higher level of depression rate (21.9 per cent) than the rest of the world. (5)

The study reveals that when age increases, geriatric depression also increases. This could be due to diminishing physical health and also age-related stress and anxiety. Increase in age in the later life is significantly associated with an increased risk of depression. (6) Older age group and female genders are significantly associated with depression. (7) Years of work experience has a significant relationship with Geriatric depression as too many years of physical and mental work, absence of scheduled work and busy life due to retirement has an impact on the level of depression. Like most of the studies, this study also reveals a significant relationship between income and Geriatric depression as the respondents earning the overall monthly income between Rs.30000 – Rs.40000 are more depressed as they belong to middle class sector and their responsibilities includes payment of children marriage loan, housing loan, medical expenses and decreased income. Study of Azad A.H (8) reveals respondents getting the income between Rs.10000 – Rs.30000 are highly depressed due to the fact that middle class is more concerned about enhancing their life standard when compared to poor.

Female respondents have high level of geriatric depression which could be due to spending the retired life within the house and their visit to outside world and interaction with others decreases. Study also reveals that female respondents are more depressed than male. (9)

This study reveals that retired non-employed elders have high level of geriatric depression when

compared to employed elders after retirement. On employed respondents have high level of Geriatric depression which could be due to restricted income, idleness and less respect because of non-employment. (10) Retired non-employed elders were more likely to get depressed compared to working elders. (11) Study by Sinha S, P (12) states that there is a high prevalence of depression among the older adults in the rural area. In the study by Probst J.C in USA, prevalence of depression was significantly higher in rural than urban population. (13) In this study also the respondents live in rural area have high level of Geriatric depression than the respondents live in urban area which could be due to disintegration of family structure, expenses on functions and festivals, worried about children, and less accessibility to medical facilities. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all the retired elders as this study has been conducted only in the selected location of Madurai district.

Conclusion

Drastic change in the family structure, empty nest syndrome, emotional poverty, adjustment to new style of life, reduced income, loss of job, health factors etc are some of the factors leads to Geriatric depression among retired elders. The present study has revealed that 28.1 per cent of elders have medium level and 9.1 per cent of retired elders have high level of Geriatric depression. It has also revealed the significant relationship between age, years of work experience, overall monthly income and Geriatric depression and the significant difference between sex, current work status and Geriatric depression. Geriatric depression is a major public health challenge among the retired elders in India and necessary steps have to be taken to manage it.

Limitation of the study

The study is restricted only with the retired elders from Government sector and left out the retired people from private sectors and unorganized sectors. This study has confined itself to only 5 retired people associations in Madurai district.

Relevance of the study

The study revealed the prevalence of Geriatric depression among retired elders and its association with socio demographic factors. There is a need to educate the retired elders, family members, health professionals and public about the causes and consequences of Geriatric depression. As Geriatric depression is a public health problem, due importance has to be given to address it in an effective manner.

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Tables

TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS FOR THE LEVEL OF GERIATRIC DEPRESSION

S. N	Particulars	No. of Respondents (n= 320)	Percentage
1.	Geriatric Depression		
	Low	201	62.8
	Medium	90	28.1
	High	29	9.1

TABLE 2 SOCIODEMOGRAHIC FACTORS AND GERIATRIC DEPRESSION

KARL PEARSON'S COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION				
S.N	Variable	Correlation value		Statistical Inference
1.	Age	.220		p< 0.01
2.	Years of work experience	.110		p< 0.01
3.	Overall monthly income	.077		p< 0.01
'Z' TEST				
S.N	Variable	N	Mean	SD	Statistical Inference
4.	Male	198	8.41	6.678	Z=2.117
	Female	122	10.18	8.088	p<0.05
5.	Employed	59	6.81	5.844	Z=2.680
	Non-Employed	261	9.60	7.489	p<0.01
6.	Urban	180	9.07	7.619	Z= 0.058
	Rural	140	9.11	6.863	p>0.05