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Original Research

Prevalence of Depression among Elderly in a Rural Population

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Depression is a common mental health disorder in late-life and an important public health problem because of its devastating consequences at any given time in a community. **Aim of the study:** To study Prevalence of Depression among Elderly in a Rural Population. **Materials and methods:** The present study was conducted in the Department of Community Medicine of the Medical institution. The study was conducted for the period of 12 months. A total population of 200 elderly individuals were considered as study population. An informed consent was obtained from the study subjects who were participated in the study. A validated geriatric depression scale was used to assess their depression status and the various demographic details, socio economic status and living arrangements were analyzed to see for any association with depression. **Results:** We observed that 90 subjects were in the age group of 60-65 years, 50 were in age group 66-70 years and 60 were in age group >70 years. There were 92 males and 108 females in our study population. It was observed that the prevalence of depression in female elderly subjects was higher as compared to male subjects. With respect to age group, highest prevalence of depression was seen in age groups 66-70 years and >70 years. **Conclusion:** Within the limitations of the present study, it can be concluded that the prevalence of depression is high in elderly population. The prevalence of depression is higher in elderly females as compared to males and it increases with advancing age.

Keywords: Depression, prevalence of depression, elderly population, geriatric population.

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INTRODUCTION:

Depression is a common mental health disorder in late-life and an important public health problem because of its devastating consequences at any given time in a community. Its recent global prevalence was 4.4%.¹ Among all mentally ill individuals, 40% were diagnosed to have a depressive disorder.² Depression was the second global disease burden in 2010 and it is projected to be the first cause of years lived with disability (YLD) in 2020.³ It has been increasing in terms of both disability and mortality rates around the world. People with the depressive disorder have a 40% greater chance of premature death than their

counterparts. Depression is one of the most common illnesses in the elderly population. Among elderly people, chronic diseases, restricted mobility, bereavement, elderly abuse, isolation, and loss of income are major risk factors for depression, in addition to common risk factors in all age groups.⁴ Depression in the elderly persons may have a varied presentation and may be difficult to diagnose.⁵ It has devastating consequences and contributes significantly to misery in this phase of life.⁶ Hence, the present study was conducted to study depression among geriatric in a rural population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The present study was conducted in the Department of Community Medicine of the Medical institution. The ethical clearance for the study was approved from the ethical committee of the hospital. The study was conducted for the period of 12 months. A total population of 200 elderly individuals were considered as study population. An informed consent was obtained from the study subjects who were participated in the study. A validated geriatric depression scale was used to assess their depression status and the various demographic details, socio economic status and living arrangements were analyzed to see for any association with depression.

The statistical analysis of the data was done using SPSS version 11.0 for windows. Chi-square and Student’s t-test were used for checking the significance of the data.

A p-value of 0.05 and lesser was defined to be statistically significant.

RESULTS:

In the present study, a population of 200 elderly was studied for depression prevalence. Table 1 shows distribution of elderly by age group and sex. We observed that 90 subjects were in the age group of 60-65 years, 50 were in age group 66-70 years and 60 were in age group >70 years. There were 92 males and 108 females in our study population [Fig 1]. Table 2 shows prevalence of depression classified by sex and age group. It was observed that the prevalence of depression in female elderly subjects was higher as compared to male subjects. With respect to age group, highest prevalence of depression was seen in age groups 66-70 years and >70 years. The results on comparison were found to be statistically significant.

Table 1: Distribution of elderly by age group and sex

Age group	Male	Female	Total
60-65 years	40	50	90 (45)
66-70 ears	22	28	50 (25)
>70 years	30	30	60 (30)
Total	92 (46)	108 (54)	200 (100)

Fig 1: Distribution of elderly by age group and sex

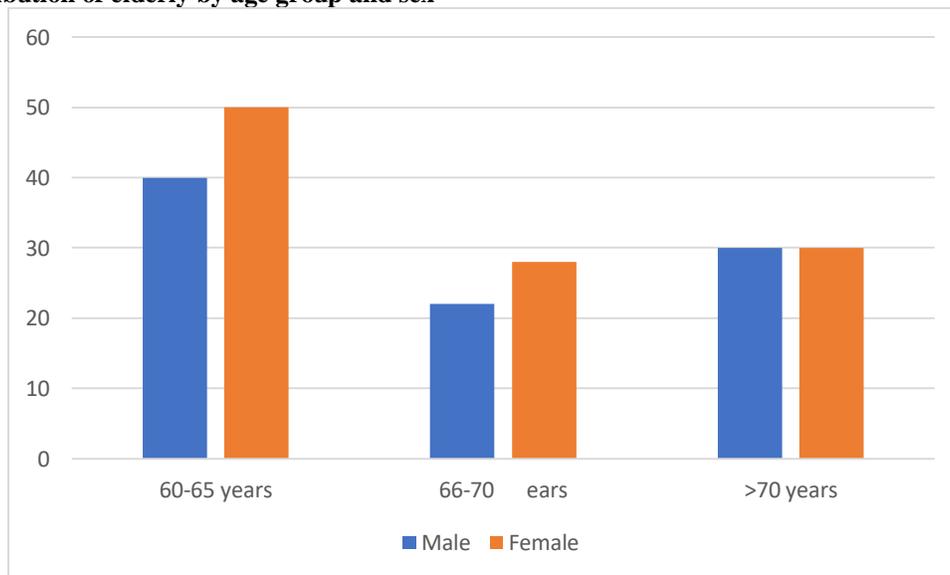
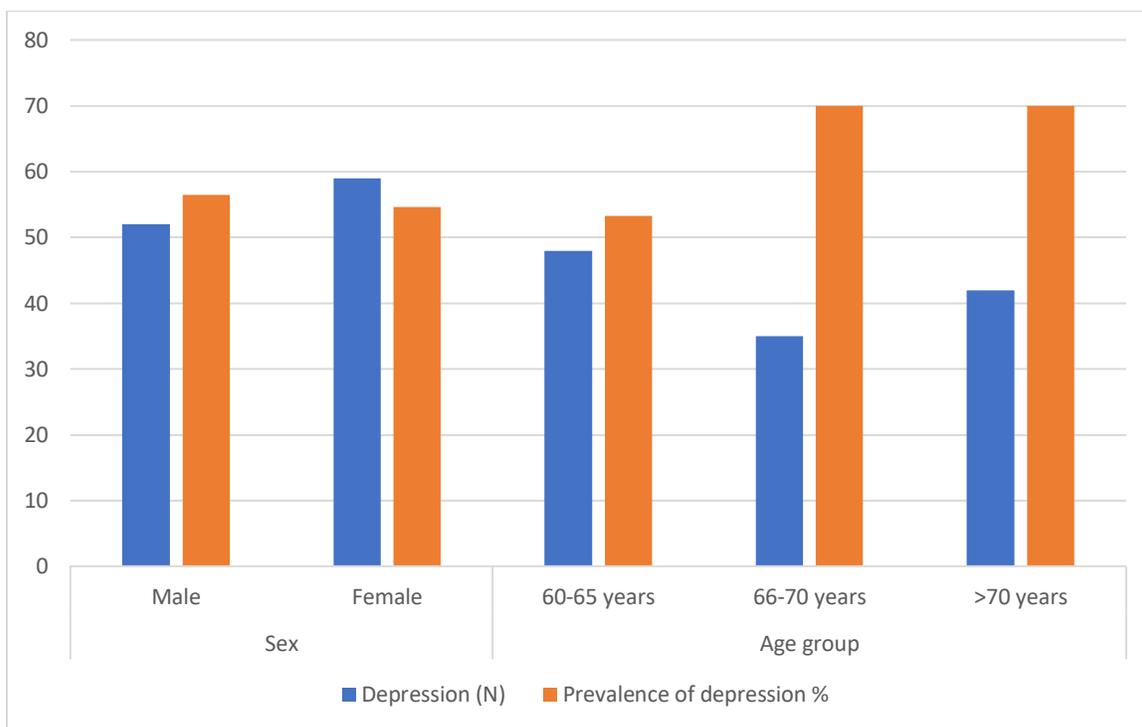


Table 2: Prevalence of depression classified by sex and age group

Groups		Total	Depression (N)	Prevalence of depression %	p-value
Sex	Male	92	52	56.52	0.002
	Female	108	74	68.51	
Age group	60-65 years	90	48	53.33	0.001
	66-70 years	50	35	70.00	
	>70 years	60	42	70.00	

Fig 2: Prevalence of depression classified by sex and age group



DISCUSSION:

In the present study, we performed a study on population of 200 elderly subjects. There were 108 females and 92 males in our study population. The age of subjects ranged from 60 to more than 70 years. As per our results, the prevalence of depression increases in elderly age and it is more pronounced in females as compared to males. Also, the prevalence of depression increases with age. The results of our study were statistically significant. The results were compared with previous studies from the literature. Rathod MS et al ⁷ conducted study to know the burden and risk factors of depression among the elderly. The survey was done in 2015 in Maharashtra, India as a part of an initiative addressing community mental health needs of the elderly. Total 400 elderly, aged 60 years and above, were selected through a house-to-house survey, using probability proportional to size method, and interviewed for depression using Major Depression Inventory Scale (MDI Scale), and other potential risk factors using a pretested questionnaire. A total of 16.75% elderly had depression. Increasing age, illiteracy, lack of sleep, and leisure time spending alone were found to be associated with depression. However, on multivariate analysis, only sleep duration <6 h was found to be associated. They concluded that there is a considerable burden of depression in the elderly, reemphasizing the need for regular screening for this disorder and its risk factors. Goyal A et al ⁸ explored the

prevalence of depressive symptoms and possible correlational factors among elderly population. 100 elderly persons were screened. 100 respondents interviewed, 40 were 70 years and above and 41% were male. Sixty individuals (25 males and 35 females) were found to be mildly depressed. Seventeen (4 males and 13 females) were suffering from severe depression. This study was in line with previous studies showing the high prevalence of depression in elderly. Results suggest a proper screening for depression among elderly. Goswami S et al ⁹ studied the magnitude of depression among the elderly masses in rural Maharashtra and to find its correlates. This is a cross sectional study, carried out among the elderly population of both sexes residing in the field practice area of the department of community medicine. The magnitude of depression among the elderly population was found to be 41.7%. They got the significant positive association of female sex, living without spouse, lacking in decision making capability, a victim of abuse or neglect, or suffering from chronic illnesses with depression among elderly population in univariate analysis that did not hold good in the multivariate logistic regression. Their study showed the prevalence of mild depression among elderly to be 26.72% and that of severe depression to be 15.17%. They concluded that to deal with this huge social problem of depression among the elderly population, more enthusiastic steps should be undertaken. N S et al ¹⁰ assessed the prevalence of

depression among the elderly and determined the epidemiological factors which are associated with depression. The individuals who were aged 60 years and above were interviewed and examined. By random sampling, the villages were selected. This study was conducted through house-to-house visits in the selected villages. Clinical examinations, observations and interviews were carried out by using a pre-designed, pre-tested proforma in the local language. The prevalence of depression was 47%. The depression was high among the elderly who were aged 80 years and above (54.3%), females (56.5%), illiterates (59.0%), those who were below the poverty line (86.1%), those who were living alone (87.3%), those who were economically partially dependent (63.3%) and those depended totally for the activities of daily living (100.0%). These factors were significantly associated with depression. They concluded that the prevalence of depression was found to be positively associated with increasing age, the female sex, illiteracy, a low socio-economic status, those who were living alone, those who were economically partially dependent and those who were totally dependent for the activities of daily living.

CONCLUSION:

Within the limitations of the present study, it can be concluded that the prevalence of depression is high in elderly population. The prevalence of depression is higher in elderly females as compared to males and it increases with advancing age.

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