

Emerging Issues of Non-Communicable Diseases among Older Persons in India

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Abstract : Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) are major contributing factors to the disease burden in the world as well as in India. With a growing proportion of older persons in India gives rise to several challenges. With the advancement of age, elderly is exposed to various kinds of health problems more specifically NCDs. Therefore, an effort has been made to examine the prevalence of NCDs among older persons and its treatment-seeking behaviour, also it is tried to explore the association between the NCDs and its effect on the overall wellbeing of older persons. Data used from "Building Knowledge Base of Population Ageing Survey" conducted in 2011 in seven states of India. Six chronic diseases used (non-communicable diseases) namely Arthritis, Hypertension, Cataract, Diabetes, Asthma and Heart diseases to understand the issues related to NCDs. Also seen the effect of NCDs on the wellbeing of the elderly, the subjective well-being consists of nine questions from which SUBI score generated for mental health status, which ranges from 9 to 27. This Index indicates that lower the score better is the mental health status. Further, this index modified and generated three categories of Better (9-15), Average (16-20) and Worse (21-27). The reliability analysis is carried out with the coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale was 0.8884. The result shows that Orthopedic / musculoskeletal ailments involving arthritis, rheumatism and osteoarthritis are the most common type of ailment followed by hypertension. Two-thirds of the elderly reported suffering from at least one chronic ailment. Most chronic illness conditions received some form of treatment and mainly depend on public health facilities. Financial insecurity is the primary obstruction in seeking treatment for most of the chronic ailments which typically require a longer duration of medication and repeated medical consultations, both having significant economic implications. According to SUBI index, only 15 per cent of the elderly are in Better mental health status, and one-third of the elderly are with the worse score. Elderly with the ailments like Cataract, Asthma and Arthritis have worse mental health. It depicts that the burden of disease is more among the elderly and it is directly affecting the overall wellbeing of older persons.

Keywords : NCD, well-being, older person, India

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