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Research Article

**Health Problems faced by Geriatric Patients in urban  
areas of India**

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**ABSTRACT**

A survey was conducted among the elderly people to know about the various problems like remembering the dose, unsatisfactory packaging of the medicine, effect of economy on their therapy, to check the awareness about the side effects of drugs they consume and to know the services provided by the pharmacist in this respect. The elderly have multiple and often chronic diseases therefore, it is not surprising that they are major consumers of the medicine. Hence the survey was conducted among 100 elderly people by designing questionnaire. For this purpose population of the elderly subjects were divided as per their age in the groups of 60 to 70, 70 to 80 and 80 above. Survey was conducted in the cities of India like Pune, Mumbai, Thane, Baroda and Nagpur. At the end of study it was observed that the majority of elderly people suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes and joint pain like diseases and the small crowd suffer from other problems like heart diseases, renal diseases, Obesity and Asthma. It was also concluded that instructions to elderly peoples should be given in the domestic language and patient leaflet should also be written in the same language. There is need to improve methods of packaging medicine and counseling the elderly with love and affection by the pharmacist.

**Keywords:** unsatisfactory packaging, Awareness, Patient leaflet, Patient counseling.

**INTRODUCTION**

As adults age gradual changes occur in pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics increase the inter-individual variability of dose required for a given effect<sup>1</sup>. Pharmacokinetics changes result from changes in body composition and the function of drug-eliminating organs. The clearance of many drugs is reduced in the elderly. Changes in pharmacodynamics also are important factors in treating elderly<sup>1, 2</sup>. Failure to thrive is common in elderly patients and is associated with increased morbidity and mortality.<sup>5</sup> The proportion of elderly and very old, in the population of developed nations is increasing rapidly. They have more illness than younger people and consume a disproportionate share of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. They therefore should receive drugs only when absolutely necessary for well-defined indications and at the lowest effective dose. Older adults in particular are at increased risk because of the growing numbers of medications they takes and increased sensitivity to drug responses with age.<sup>4</sup> Polypharmacy is common among the elderly.<sup>6</sup> Thus for optimal drug therapy in elderly, knowledge of age-related physiological

and pathological changes that might affect handling of and response to drug is essential. Understanding age-related changes in pharmacodynamic factor, avoiding polypharmacy and regular and critical review of all drug treatment will help in rationalization of drug prescribing and also cost of drug therapy this important subgroup of patients.

**METHODOLOGY**

A systematic questionnaire was designed having 22 questions with assistance of the literature and keeping in mind all the basic problems elderly face. The multiple choice questions were asked out of which few were having four choices and few were having two choices. The questionnaire was prepared in English and Marathi. The study was conducted in areas of Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Baroda and Nagpur. A visit to an old age home was also conducted. 100 elderly people (both male and female) in age group 60-80 above responded to the questionnaire.

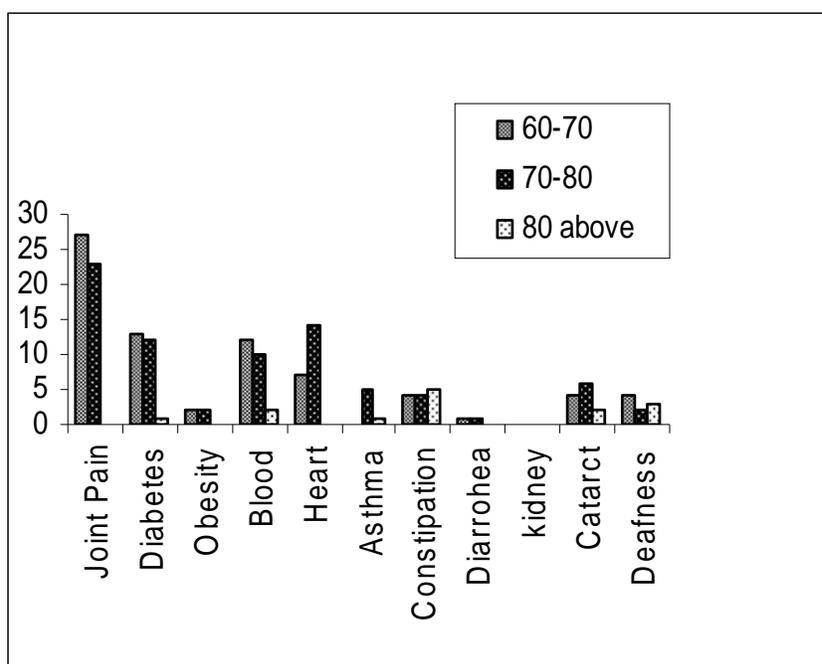
**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

From the data collected we came to know the majority of the elderly had awareness and a positive attitude towards the medication therapy they were undergoing. Majority of the people belonged to the age group of 60-70(54%) and least number in 80 above age group (6%), out of these 50% suffered from joint pain, 26% from diabetes, and 24% from blood pressure. This shows that problem of joint pain is a major threat to these people. 21% of elderly people suffered from heart problem and other common problems like cataract (12%), Asthma (6%), constipation (13%), hearing problem (9%) were observed. Some typical cases of fits, convulsions and swelling were also sighted. 59% of elderly remember the dose by themselves and 15% rely on others (friend, relative or anyone at home) for remembering the dose this is because either they do not want to take medicine or there is loss of memory that is they forget whether they have taken the medicine or not and in this confusion they miss the dose or take it for double time. If they forget the dose, 32% of them correct the dose by ignoring the first one and taking the next dose, while 3% of them take two doses at a time. This shows that a large amount of elderly are

aware of the consequence of taking two doses at a time, which can be seriously dangerous thus pharmacist should guide the elderly to avoid this mistake to prevent the mishap from happening . There are 94% of elderly who follow instructions given by doctor regarding diet and thus show the awareness in them of effect of diet on medicine in their action. 59% of elderly are helped by pharmacists to make them understand the instructions written by the doctor on the prescription. 63% of the elderly tell their friends and relatives to consult doctor when they are ill rather than giving their medicines while 7% still do it. 88% of them read the expiry date while 13% do not, the only reason is that they are illiterate and some of them can't read English. 49% have addiction and tell to their doctor without hesitation but 4% only partially inform. 69% of elderly feel that special box with compartment equal to the number of tablets should be provided i.e. they need an improvement in packaging for their ease. Some major allergies found were of sulpha drugs and some antibiotics. Most of them prefer ayurveda and homeopathy over allopathy because of fewer side effects and a kind of Indian tradition.

**Table1: Percentage Distribution of Diseases in Geriatrics**

S. No.	Disease occurrence	60-70	70-80	80 above
1	Joint Pain	27	23	0
2	Diabetes	13	12	1
3	Obesity	2	2	0
4	Blood pressure	12	10	2
5	Heart Disease	7	14	0
6	Asthma	0	2	1
7	Constipation	4	4	5
8	Diarrohea	1	1	0
9	kidney Disease	0	0	0
10	Cataract	4	6	2
11	Deafness	4	2	3



434

Fig. 1: Percentage Distribution of Diseases in Geriatrics

#### CONCLUSION

As compared to previous days now there is lot of awareness in elderly people about their health and wellbeing. The only reason for not reading the expiry date is the problem of illiteracy even though staying in urban areas the old aged people are still unable to read and write, and some know only the local language or their mother tongue and do not know English. Thus a patient leaflet must be provided with every drug and its instruction written in domestic local language. If some principles of ayurveda can be incorporated in allopathy that would be wonderful. Combination of affection and counseling will lead to excellent patient counseling and will definitely help our society and improve the health status of every individual.

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