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Assessment of nursing care needs of elderly in Chandigarh, North India: A pilot study

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Abstract

Background of Study: Elderly population is continuously increasing in India. As the age advances there is decline in physical function of the elderly. A study was planned to estimate the nursing care needs of the elderly in north India. The results of a pilot survey conducted before launching the main study are hereby presented.

Purpose: To fine tune a tool to estimate the nursing care needs of the elderly in the study areas.

Material and Method: This pilot study was carried out in a rural and an urban area of Chandigarh, on 20 elderly. The data was collected over the period of two months. A scale developed for the study was used to evaluate the physical, mental, social, and nutritional level of the subjects. Problems encountered in carrying out the survey and in filling up the proforma were noted.

Result: Mean age of the subjects was 71 yrs with the range of 61 to 88 years; 12 were females and 8 were males. Literacy rate was 50%. Majority were retired from service. Eleven had some source of income (i.e. pension) and 9 were completely dependent on others for financial help. Ten of them were living without spouse but with children. Monthly income of 5 families was less than ten thousand rupees ($ 200). Majority (70.8%) of caregivers stayed with the elderly for the whole day and 7 (29.2%) spent only the evening time with elderly. None of the caregiver was formally trained for care giving. Three (15%) elderly were malnourished. One elderly was fully dependent on others, 5 (25%) were partially dependent and most 14 (70%) of them were independent for their activities of daily life. Three elderly could not use telephone at all. Eleven were completely unable to go for shopping. Twelve (60%) of the elderly needed assistance to have meals prepared and served. Eleven elderly could not participate in any housekeeping tasks. Eleven were unable to handle their laundry. Six could not travel at all. Majority (85%) were satisfied basically with their life.

Conclusion: The tool and the survey techniques used for the study were appropriate for the purpose. The study was feasible. Preliminary results indicate that there is a definite need of nursing care for elderly in the study area. Caregiver training needs to be organized.

Biography

Sukhpal Kaur completed her Ph.D. in 2003. She has twenty years of teaching experience. Presently, she is working as faculty at National Institute of Nursing Education, PGIMER, Chandigarh, India. She is member of 14 national scientific bodies. She has presented many papers and is the invited guest faculty at local, national and international conferences. She has number of publications in reputed journals and also is the author of many chapters in various books. She has keen interest in elderly and palliative care. She has completed many research projects. At present, she is the principal investigator of five research projects funded by institute research scheme; Dept of Science and Technology, New Delhi; Dept. of Biotechnology, New Delhi and Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi.

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