

Health seeking behaviour of elderly in Myanmar

Abstract

Introduction: Improvement in health technologies and socio economic conditions increase life expectancy of people leading to higher proportion of elderly in total population of every country worldwide. Developing countries have less comprehensive policy and elderly health agenda, and Myanmar is not an exception. The World Health Organization highlighted that aging process and problems related to elderly should be better understood so that effective elderly health prevention can be planned and implemented. However, there are very limited studies in Myanmar for aging health care.

Objective: 1) To identify the Health status of aging population in selected townships of upper and lower Myanmar. 2) To identify the health seeking behavior of elderly. 3) To find out the association between the health seeking behavior of elderly and socio-demographic characteristics.

Method: This is a cross sectional survey to study health status and health seeking behavior of the elderly people in Myanmar. Study areas are Taungu from Lower Myanmar and Ye Oo from Upper Myanmar both of which are not under cover of elderly project and have no adequate data for elderly health care. Sample size calculation was done by Epi Info StatCalc. Total 729 elderly were under study. According to elderly population in Taungu and Ye Oo, 1/3 of the sample was taken from Taungu and 2/3 taken from Ye Oo.

Result: Male, Female ratio of study population is 1:1.44. Around half of elderly population has primary or lower level education, only one third are working but with low income. One third of male and female elderly perceived that they are in good health. Regarding illnesses present at the time of interview, three percent of male and thirteen percent of female did not get treatment. Significant difference between the health seeking behavior of upper and lower Myanmar was seen with chi square value 1155, $P = <00000001$. Health seeking behavior was not associated with Gender, ethnicity, religion. However it is related to income and education level.

Conclusion: Since this is a preliminary study in the non-project area it revealed many knowledge gap. Therefore further study on elderly

morbidity and health seeking behavior is recommended with emphasis on triangulation of study methods as well as triangulation of data collection methods.