

Abuse among elderly living in old age homes of Pokhara Lekhnath

Metropolitan City

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Abstract

Elder abuse is a common social problem in developed and developing countries and it imposes a huge impact in the physical and mental health of the elderly. With the changes in the socioeconomic aspect of Nepalese society, many elderly are relocating from their homes to old age homes. This study was conducted to assess the status of abuse among the elderly before they enter to old aged homes.

A cross sectional study was conducted to assess the status of abuse among elderly before they enter to the old age homes. Consecutive sampling technique was used and semi structured interview schedule was used to collect the data from 109 elderly residing in 6 old aged homes in Pokhara. Collected data was analyzed descriptive and inferential (chi square) statistics using SPSS version 16.

The findings from the study showed that that 97.2% of the elderly experienced some forms of abuse before they were brought to the old Age home. Majority of them reported that they

experienced neglect (83.5%) followed by verbal abuse (34.9) while least of them (5.5%) reported that they suffered physical abuse(2.8%) and financial abuse(2.8%). However, no significant association could be seen between abuse of elderly with age, education, marital status, place of residence, having children and adequacy of income. It is recommended that the nation develop and implement necessary plans to strengthen the social security of the people at their old age.

Background

The prevalence of elderly abuse is increasing worldwide in both Asia Pacific and European countries and is a key challenge in the globe. ^{1,2} Elder abuse is not only medical and functional problem but it is also a social problem; abuse is considered a social taboo in Nepal. Therefore, even though a common problem, it is a hidden problem in Nepalese society and hence very less proportion of them are reported.

Despite this scenario, community based studies show a high prevalence of elder abuse in Nepal.^{3,4,5,6}This imposes bad impact on all the dimensions of health of the elderly^{5,6,7,8} resulting in conditions like wounds and fractures, increased susceptibility of new disease conditions, exacerbation of prior illness, anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder in the elderly.⁹Elder abuse is one of the factors that push elders to the old age home.^{10,11}Although there are government provisions for elderly in the developed countries, elderly in developing countries are facing the issues like income insecurity; 80% of the elders have no regular income, high prevalence of NCDs, poor access to appropriate health services and age discrimination in access to health care and humanitarian response. ^{12,13,14}

In Nepal, with the changes in the socioeconomic trend of the Nepalese people, the movement of elderly to old aged homes have increased. This study is aimed to assess the abuse status of elderly prior to the arrival at old age homes that signals the reasons why more elderly are moving to old age homes in the present context.

Research Methodology

A cross sectional descriptive research design was used for the study. The study was carried out in geriatric homes of Pokhara Metropolitan city. It consists of 6 geriatric homes: 5 community run geriatric home and 1 privately run geriatric home. They are: Watsayan geriatric home, Pokhara Aged Shelter, Happy Home and Shree Radha Krishna Senior Citizen Residence. Census survey was carried out in all those old aged homes. All the residents of geriatric home, elderly 60 years and above who had sound mental health and could understand and respond to the questions asked were included in the study and data was collected from 109 respondents using a semi structured interview schedule using face to face method of interview that was developed by researcher themselves being based on the and key variable organized through extensive literature review on similar subject matter and on validated tools Elder Abuse Suspicion Index¹⁵ and The Elder Assessment Instrument ¹⁶to fit the social context of Nepal. Effort was made to make questions clear, orderly set and easy to understand. The interview schedule was prepared in English language, further translated into Nepali language and again backward to English to maintain stability making consultation with Nepali and English language experts.

The study was carried out after the approval of research proposal TU Institutional Review Committee. The approved proposal along with written request letter was submitted to the concerned geriatric homes of pokhara metropolitan city for the permission and concerned authorities and they were briefed about the objectives, process and the importance of the study and

formal permission was taken for the data collection. Data was collected from August 2018 to December 2018. Data was collected by interviewing the elderly at a separate room in each of the old age homes. Prior to data collection, informed verbal and written consent was taken with information about the nature of the study and participants' role in the research. The average time required to complete the questionnaire was 30-35 minutes. Probing was done to prevent the recall bias. Collected data was checked and if something found unclear was corrected then and there. Precaution was taken throughout the study to safeguard the rights and welfare of the respondents. The respondents were given full authority to withdraw from the study without fear and explanation at any time during data collection. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study by omitting the name or any identity of respondents as well as by conducting the interview separately. Collected data was edited, organized, coded and entered in SPSS 16 version for analysis. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage mean and standard deviation. Chi square test was used to identify the factors associated with elderly abuse.

Results:

Table 1 shows that 39.4% of the elderly were from age group 66-70 years and 60.6% of the elderly were females. Majority of the respondents were illiterate (76.1%) and from rural area of residence (67%). Regarding the residence before coming to the old age homes, 41.3% of the respondents reported that they lived with their children with/out in laws before coming to the old age homes while 80.7% reported that it was their decision to come to the old age home.

Table 1: Sociodemographic information of respondents)

n=109

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Above 60-65	14	13.8
66-70	43	39.4
71-75	28	25.7
76 and above	23	21.1
Sex		
Male	43	39.4
Female	66	60.6
Education		
Illiterate	83	76.1
informally literate	8	7.3
Primary	12	11
Secondary	3	2.8
Bachelor and above	3	2.8
Decision making to come to geriatric home		
Self decided	88	80.7
Decided by someone else	21	19.3

Duration of stay		
0-5 years	58	53.2
6-10yrs	36	33
11-15 yrs	10	9.2
>15 yrs	4	3.6
Place of residence		
VDC	73	67
Municipality	36	33
Before coming to Geriatric home, resided with		
Children with/out inlaws	45	41.3
In-laws alone(son/daughter)	2	1.8
other relatives	22	20.2
Friends	5	4.6
Alone	29	26.6
Spouse	3	2.8

Regarding marital status, 41.3% of the elderly were married and 36.7% of them were either widow/ separated or divorced; 54.10% of the elderly had children, 81.7% of them had farming as their occupation before they went to the geriatric homes while 70.6% of the elderly reported that they had their yearly income sufficient for their basic living (Table 2).

Table 2: Other Background Characteristics of Respondents

Other Background Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Educational status		
informally literate	8	7.3
Primary	12	11
Secondary	3	2.8
Bachelor and above	3	2.8
Illiterate	83	76.1
Marital Status		
Married	45	41.3
Unmarried	24	22
widow/widower/separated/divorced	40	36.7
Having children (n=85)		
Yes	46	54.10
No	39	63.90
Females Married/widow/separated/divorced (n=58)		
Married with children	29	50
Married without children	29	50
Previous Occupation		
Farming	89	81.7

Service	12	11
Begging	1	0.9
Others	5	4.6
daily wages	2	1.8
Adequacy of annual income		
Yes	77	70.6
No	32	29.4

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents came to the old aged home because of their own wish.

Table 3: Major reason of coming to old age home

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
one's own wish	61	56
Having no one to care	27	24.8
Children's wish	9	8.3
Forcefullysent	12	11
Total	109	100

In regard to the presence of chronic diseases, 55% of the elderly reported that they had chronic disease conditions before they came to the old age home and only 50% reported that they got regular treatment of the disease conditions. After the arrival of the elderly at old age homes,

81.67% of the elderly reported that they were getting regular treatment of their disease conditions (Table 4).

Table 4: Health status of elderly before coming to the Geriatric Homes

Health Related Characteristics Before Coming to the Geriatric Home	Frequency	Percent
Chronic health conditions before coming to the Geriatric home		
Yes	60	55
No	49	45
Regular treatment for chronic diseases		
Yes	49	81.67
No	11	18.33
Regular treatment in the past		
Yes	30	50
No	30	50

Table 5 shows that Gastro intestinal problem was the major health problem among the adolescents before settling into the old age homes

Table 5: Diseases among elderly before coming to old age homes n=60

Diseases	Frequency	Percent
Heart and Hypertension	23	8.3
COPD	9	7.3

Others	1	0.9
Diabetes	4	2.8
Leprosy	1	0.9
Gastro intestinal problems	13	11.9
Mild mental problems	5	4.6
arthritis	6	5.5

Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents (81.7%) reported that they had access to food as other family member while least(9.2%) reported confinement on visiting friends and relatives.

Table 7 shows that fourteen percentage of the elderly reported that they had some form of physical disability before coming to the geriatric home; 6.4% of the elderly reported that they were dependent on others for their activities of daily living before they came to the old age home while 10.1% of the respondents reported dependence on others for basic activities of daily living at present.

Table 6: Neglect of Elderly before coming to old age homes

Characteristics indicating Abuse before coming to geriatric home	Frequency	Percentage
Neglect		
Access to food as other members of family	89	81.7
Access to cloth as other members of family	86	78.9
Access to medical treatment in need	73	67
Spouse not provided the same room to sleep	18	16.5

Restriction on visiting friends and relatives	10	9.2
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Table 7 shows that 14.7% of the elderly had some form of physical disability before they came to the old age home while 10.1% of the elderly reported being dependent on others at present for basic activities of daily living.

Table 7: Dependence of elderly on their caregivers for activity of daily living before coming to the geriatric home

Dependence	Frequency	Percentage
Any physical disability before coming to the geriatric home	16	14.7
Dependent on other for basic activities of daily living before coming to the institution	7	6.4
Dependent on other for BALDS at present	11	10.1

Before coming to the old aged home, 18.3% of the elderly reported that their caregiver expressed resentment on having to care while 16.5% of the elderly reported that their caregiver expressed resentment on having to spend money for those elderly (Table 8).

Table 8: Resentment expressed by caregivers for care of elderly before coming to the Geriatric home

Resentment	Frequency	Percentage
Resentment on having to care	20	18.3
Resentment on having to spend money	18	16.5

Regarding sexual abuse, table 9 shows that 5.5% of the elderly experienced physical abuse before they came to the old age home while equal percentage (7.3%) experienced some forms of sexual abuse before coming to the old age homes.

Table 9: Physical and sexual abuse of elderly before coming to the Geriatric Home

Physical /Sexual Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Anyone beat/harm physically	6	5.5
Touch body parts despite any will	8	7.3
Try to establish forceful sexual relation	8	7.3

In regard to respect, table 10 shows that 21.1% of the elderly reported that their children respected them while only 45.9% of the elderly reported that they were involved in decision making regarding their own preferences.

Table 10: Respect demonstrated by caregivers towards elderly before coming to the Geriatric homes

Respect	Frequency	Percentage
Children respect as parents (n=62)	24	21.1
Involved in decision making regarding own preferences	50	45.9

In contrast, 27.5% of the elderly reported that they were often scolded in nonsense things from their caregivers while 17.4% of them reported that they were blamed for things they did not commit (Table 11).

Table 12: Verbal Abuse Reported by the elderly Before Coming to the Geriatric Homes

Verbal Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Speak against to humiliate	26	23.9
Scold in nonsense things	30	27.5
Blame for things you did not commit	19	17.4

In concern to financial abuse, 45% of the elderly reported that they possess property in their name , 5.5% of the elderly reported that they depended on others for their own expenses while 0.9% of the respondents reported that they were forced to sign the property of their name (Table 12).

Table 12: Financial Abuse Reported by the elderly Before Coming to the Geriatric Homes

Finanacial	Frequency	Percentage
depend on others for own expenses	6	5.5
Possess any property in own name	49	45
Dispute regarding property	6	5.5
Restriction on spending own money	3	2.8
Forced to sign papers of property	1	0.9

Table 13 shows that 7.3% of the elderly reported that they were past drunker, while 6.4% reported that their family member was abuser of alcohol and 3.7% of the family member verbally abused the elderly after ingesting alcohol.

Table 13: Abuse of Alcohol Among Elderly and the caregivers before coming to the elderly homes

Abuse of alcohol	Frequency	Percentage
Alcohol intake by respondents	8	7.3
Alcohol abuse by family members	7	6.4
Verbal scolding after abuse of alcohol	4	3.7

The study reveals that 97.2% of the elderly experienced some forms of abuse before they were brought to the old Age home. Majority of them reported that they experienced neglect(83.5%) followed by verbal abuse (34.9%), confinement (9.2%), sexual abuse (7.3%)resentment(32.1%)

while least of them (5.5%) reported that they suffered physical abuse and financial abuse (2.8%) (Table 14).

Table 14: Forms of Abuse experienced by elderly before coming to the Geriatric home

Forms of Abuse experienced by elderly	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal Abuse	38	34.9
Physical Abuse	6	5.5
Neglect	91	83.5
Financial Abuse	3	2.8
Resentment	35	32.1
Confinement	10	9.2
Sexual	8	7.3
Total Abuse	106	97.2

Table 15 shows that there is no significant association between abuse of elderly with age, education, marital status, place of residence, having children and adequacy of income.

Table 15: Association of background characteristics with abuse among elderly

Characteristics	Abuse		P value
	Yes	No	
Age			0.09
Up to 70 yrs	0 (0)	58(100%)	

After 70 yrs	3(5.9%)	48(94.1%)	
Education			
Illiterate	3(3.6%)	80(96.4%)	0.43
Literate	0(0%)	26(100%)	
Marital Status			
Unmarried/Divorced/Separated	0(0)	64(100%)	0.06
Married	3(6.7%)	42(93.3%)	
Place of Residence			
Rural	1(1.4%)	72(98.6%)	0.25
Urban	2(5.6%)	34(94.4%)	
Having children			
No	2(2.9%)	39(95.1%)	0.45
Yes	1(2.2%)	45(97.8%)	
Adequacy of yearly income			
Inadequate	0(0%)	32(100%)	0.55
Adequate	3(3.9%)	74(96.1%)	

Discussion

With the change in social, physical and financial status in Nepalese community, the number of geriatric homes are on increasing trend in Nepal. Although the religious places like temples were used to give shelter to the homeless traditionally, the concept of modern old age homes with increased facilities have grown in Nepal.

This study showed that 97.2% of the elderly experienced some forms of abuse before they were brought to the Old Age home. The result is significantly higher as compared to other studies conducted in other regions of Nepal. A study conducted in the geriatric home of Kathmandu showed that 57.9% of the elderly experienced some form of abuse before coming to the geriatric homes.¹⁰ Similar study conducted in the community setting in Nepal showed that 26% older adults had experienced of elder abuse in the last six month.¹⁷ Another study found that 47% of the older adults had an experience of some forms of elder abuse. This indicates that elder abuse is one of the greatest pushing factor for elderly in Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan city to move to the old age homes.

This study shows that prior to living in the old age homes, majority of the elderly reported that they experienced neglect (83.5%) followed by verbal abuse (34.9%), confinement (9.2%), sexual abuse (7.3%), resentment (32.1%), physical abuse (5.5%) and financial abuse (2.8%). This finding is significantly higher than the study conducted in Geriatric homes of Kathmandu valley which showed that 34.8% of the elderly reported experienced neglect, 25.3% reported verbal abuse, 8.2% reported economic abuse 5.7% of the elderly reported physical abuse and 5.1% of the elderly experienced emotional abuse before residing in the old age homes before residing to old aged

care.¹⁰ The differences in the result may be attributed to differences in the services offered by old age homes. There are 5 geriatric homes that are community organisations in Pokhara that aim to serve the most deprived elderly while there is a single private old age home intended to provide quality service to the elderly. However, the type of old aged homes have not been clarified in the previous studies.¹⁰

Although 56% of the respondents reported that they came to the old age home because of their own wish, 24.8% of the respondents reported that they came to the old age homes because of not having any one to care; 26.6% of the elderly reported that they lived alone before coming to the old age home, 11% of the elderly told that they were forcefully sent to the old aged home while 8.3% of the respondents reported that they came to old age homes to fulfill their children's wish. A study conducted in old ages home of Kathmandu showed that the main reason of elderly abuse faced by abused elderly were disability (physical, mental) to look after themselves (42%), having no partner (death) (28%), the family was busy and there were no extra persons for care giving task (20%) and 16% reported they had no property.¹⁰ Moreover, this study also shows that more than one fourth of the elderly reported that they had income inadequate for their daily living; 55% had no property in their names and the greater proportion of elderly were females (60.6%). Though 78% of the elderly were married, half of them did not have children and all of them reported that they did not have children despite their will and as a result were neglected in the family. This shows that they lack the access to treatment for infertility, and as a result females are abused in the family. This signals a need for government to work on free infertility treatment for those required. This study also shows that although 55% of the respondents had some form of chronic diseases, only 50% of them were getting regular treatment. This shows that the elderly are suffering physically with symptoms in the community. However, after their arrival at old age homes, 81.6%

of the respondents reported that they are getting regular treatment for their diseases. This calls for the government and ministry of social security to implement treatment facility for elderly at old age homes.

The expression about sex is a social taboo in Nepal. Despite this condition, 7.3% of the respondents reported that they experienced sexual abuse and all of the abused were females. The finding is significantly higher than the finding reported by other studies.^{10,19} This shows that females who come to old age homes were also the victims of sexual abuse.

Conclusion

Elders who come to old age homes of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City reported themselves being the victims of abuse of various forms. It is recommended for the government at the policy level to undertake necessary actions at the community to improve the quality of life of the elderly and strengthen all the aspects of elderly by solving their problems at the grass root level.

Limitations

The data is limited to the old aged homes of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan city and thus cannot be generalized to other setting. Although probing was done and since this study was focused on previous experiences, there is chances of recall bias.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare no conflict of interest

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Annexes

Table 1: Sociodemographic information of respondents **n=109**

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Above 60-65	14	13.8
66-70	43	39.4
71-75	28	25.7
76 and above	23	21.1
Sex		
Male	43	39.4
Female	66	60.6
Education		
Illiterate	83	76.1
informally literate	8	7.3
Primary	12	11
Secondary	3	2.8
Bachelor and above	3	2.8

Decision making to come to geriatric home		
Self decided	88	80.7
Decided by someone else	21	19.3
Duration of stay		
0-5 years	58	53.2
6-10yrs	36	33
11-15 yrs	10	9.2
>15 yrs	4	3.6
Place of residence		
VDC	73	67
Municipality	36	33
Before coming to Geriatric home, resided with		
Children with/out inlaws	45	41.3
In-laws alone(son/daughter)	2	1.8
other relatives	22	20.2
Friends	5	4.6
Alone	29	26.6
Spouse	3	2.8

Table 2: Other Background Characteristics of Respondents

Other Background Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Educational status		
informally literate	8	7.3
Primary	12	11
Secondary	3	2.8
Bachelor and above	3	2.8
Illiterate	83	76.1
Marital Status		
Married	45	41.3
Unmarried	24	22
widow/widower/separated/divorced	40	36.7
Having children (n=85)		
Yes	46	54.10
No	39	63.90
Females		
Married/widow/separated/divorced (n=58)		
Married with children	29	50
Married without children	29	50

Previous Occupation		
Farming	89	81.7
Service	12	11
Begging	1	0.9
Others	5	4.6
daily wages	2	1.8
Adequacy of annual income	Frequency	Percent
Yes	77	70.6
No	32	29.4

Table 3: Reason of coming to old age home

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
one's own wish	61	56
Having no one to care	27	24.8
Children's wish	9	8.3
Forcefullysent	12	11
Total	109	100

Table 4: Health status of elderly before coming to the Geriatric Homes

Health Related Characteristics Before	Frequency	Percent
Coming to the Geriatric Home		
Chronic health conditions before coming to the Geriatric home		
Yes	60	55
No	49	45
Regular treatment for chronic diseases		
Yes	49	81.67
No	11	18.33
Regular treatment in the past		
Yes	30	50
No	30	50

Table 5: Diseases among elderly before coming to old age homes

Diseases	Frequency	Percent
Heart and Hypertension	23	8.3
COPD	9	7.3
Others	1	0.9
Diabetes	4	2.8
Leprosy	1	0.9
abdoninal problems	13	11.9
Mild mental problems	5	4.6

arthritis	6	5.5
Total	62	

Table 6: Neglect of Elderly before coming to the Geriatric Homes

Characteristics indicating Abuse before coming to geriatric home	Frequency	Percentage
Neglect		
Access to food as other members of family	89	81.7
Access to cloth as other members of family	86	78.9
Access to medical treatment in need	73	67

Spouse not provided the same room to sleep	18	16.5
Restriction on visiting friends and relatives	10	9.2

Table 7: Dependence of elderly on their caregivers for activity of daily living before coming to the geriatric home

Dependence	Frequency	Percentage
Any physical disability before coming to the geriatric home	16	14.7
Dependent on other for basic activities of daily living before coming to the institution	7	6.4
Dependent on other for BALDS at present	11	10.1

Table 8: Resentment expressed by caregivers for care of elderly before coming to the Geriatric home

Resentment	Frequency	Percentage
Resentment on having to care	20	18.3

Resentment on having to spend money	18	16.5
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Table 9: Physical and sexual abuse of elderly before coming to the Geriatric Homes

Physical /Sexual Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Anyone beat/harm physically	6	5.5
Touch body parts despite any will	8	7.3
Try to establish forceful sexual relation	8	7.3

Table 10: Respect demonstrated by caregivers towards elderly before coming to the Geriatric homes

Respect	Frequency	Percentage
Children respect as parents (n=62)	24	21.1
Involved in decision making regarding own preferences	50	45.9

Table 11: Verbal abuse reported by respondents before coming to the Geriatric Homes

Verbal Abuse		
Speak against to humiliate	26	23.9
Scold in nonsense things	30	27.5
Blame for things you did not commit	19	17.4

Table 12: Financial Abuse Reported by the elderly Before Coming to the Geriatric Homes

Financial		
depend on others for own expenses	6	5.5
Possess any property in own name	49	45
Dispute regarding property	6	5.5

Restriction on spending own money	3	2.8
Forced to sign papers of property	1	0.9

Table 13: Abuse of Alcohol Among Elderly and the caregivers before coming to the elderly homes

Abuse of alcohol		
Alcohol intake by respondents	8	7.3
Alcohol abuse by family members	7	6.4
Verbal scolding after abuse of alcohol	4	3.7

Table 12: Forms of Abuse experienced by elderly before coming to the Geriatric home

Forms of Abuse experienced by elderly		
Verbal Abuse	38	34.9
Physical Abuse	6	5.5
Neglect	91	83.5
Financial Abuse	3	2.8
Resentment	35	32.1

Confinement	10	9.2
Sexual	8	7.3
Total Abuse	106	97.2

Table 13 :Association of background characteristics with abuse among elderly before coming to the geriatric home

Characteristics	Abuse		P value
	Yes	No	
Age			0.09
Up to 70 yrs	0 (0)	58(100%)	
After 70 yrs	3(5.9%)	48(94.1%)	
Education			
Illiterate	3(3.6%)	80(96.4%)	0.43
Literate	0(0%)	26(100%)	
Marital Status			
Unmarried/Divorced/Separated	0(0)	64(100%)	0.06
Married	3(6.7%)	42(93.3%)	
Place of Residence			
Rural	1(1.4%)	72(98.6%)	0.25
Urban	2(5.6%)	34(94.4%)	
Having children			
No	2(2.9%)	39(95.1%)	0.45
Yes	1(2.2%)	45(97.8%)	

Adequacy of yearly income			
Inadequate	0(0%)	32(100%)	0.55
Adequate	3(3.9%)	74(96.1%)	

WITHDRAWN
see manuscript DOI for details