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Prevalence of elder abuse among elderly living in rural and urban areas

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Abstract

The current study deals with prevalence of elder abuse among elderly living in rural and urban areas of Guntur and Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. The study consists of 120 elderly in which, 60 respondents were young old and remaining 60 respondents belonged to old-old category. Purposive random sampling technique, Exploratory research design was taken up for the study. Extent of abused elderly was examined or assessed by using the Elder abuse screening Test (EAST) by Hwalek-Sengstock (1991) and General information schedule. The study concluded that irrespective of area and gender, elder abuse was experienced by both young old and old-old elderly. However, rural older adults had less level of elder abuse than urban elderly. Comparatively, old-old elderly experienced higher level of abuse than young old elderly.

Keywords: elder abuse, young old, old-old, rural area, urban area

Introduction

Elder abuse is a repeated or single act that lack of proper action happening within any relationship where there is a hope of trust which causes suffer to an elder person (WHO 2021). India is growing old, presently in India there are 77 million older people which may increases up to 177 million with in another 25 years WHO (2017). BMC Public Health in 2018 reported that 11% of elders are experiencing abuse (Physical 5.3%, Verbal 10.2%, Neglect 5.2%, Financial 5.4%, and Disrespect 6%). Elder mistreatment can take many forms. Physical pain or injury causes physical abuse. Psychological abuse is a disturbance in the mental health. Financial abuse involving the cheating of the old person's money or property and ignore or the failure of a designated career. The increase of old-old people in the society and rise in the elder abuse is major concern today. Research has proved that elder abuse is the main or primary reason for self harm or self destruction among elderly. Hence, there is a necessity to examine the situation of elderly to present the problems and provide a quality life to the greying population. The current study is aimed to study the prevalence of elder abuse among elderly living in urban and rural areas selected districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology

The study carries off in Guntur and Nellore districts of Andhra Pradesh. The data was collected from 120 elderly persons among them 60 respondents were young old and 60 respondents were old-old. The tools used were a) Elder abuse screening test (EAST) by Hwalek - Sengstock (1991), b) General information schedule developed by the researcher to collect demographic profile of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Abuse among older women and men living in urban areas

N=60

Abuse levels	Men		Women	
	Young old n (%)	Old-old n (%)	Young old n (%)	Old-old n (%)
High	4 (26.7)	6 (40)	2 (13.3)	4 (26.7)
Medium	9 (60)	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)	9 (60)
Low	2 (13.3)	1 (6.7)	6 (40)	2 (13.3)

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The results delineated that level of elder abuse experienced by both male and female living in the urban areas. Majority of older persons had medium followed by high level and low levels.

Among males, most of the elderly who are in young old category were facing medium level of elder abuse followed by high and low levels. However among the old-old elderly,

50% of the sample had medium levels and forty per-cents of respondents had high abuse. This was because of high physical and psychological mistreatment by family and caregivers, and also their incompetent and powerless position in society. Comparatively less number of women (26.7%) who are in old-old age category had high levels of Elder abuse.

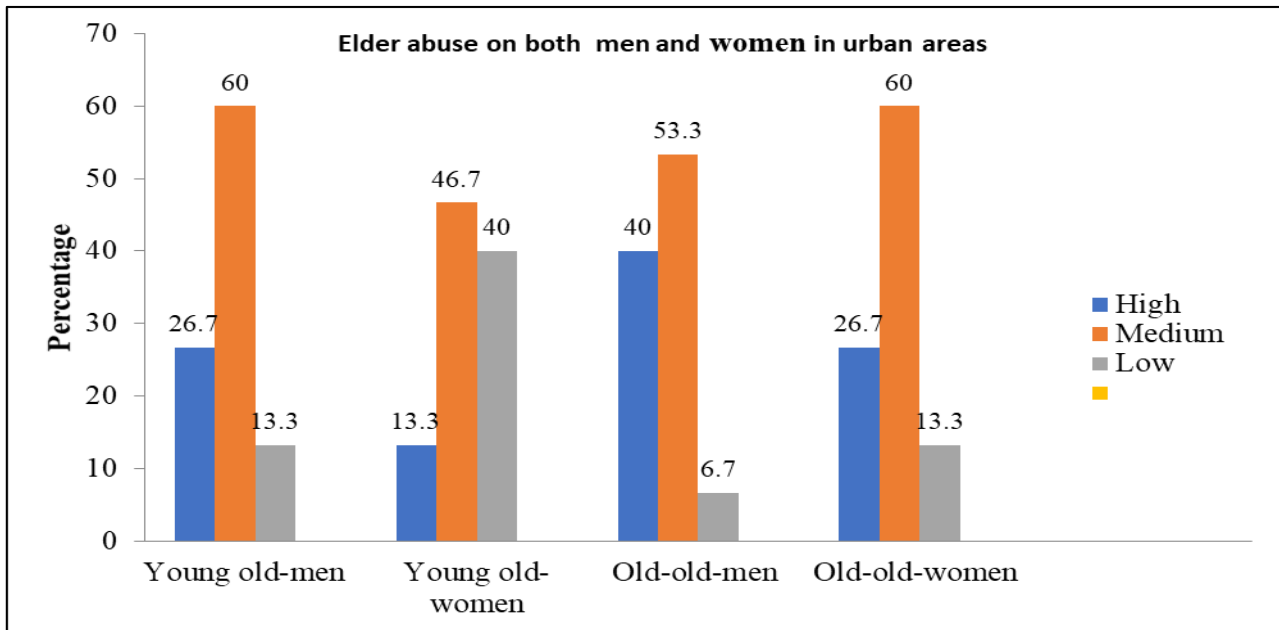


Fig 1: Abuse among women and men in urban areas

Table 2: Abuse among older adults of women and men living in rural areas

N=60

Elder abuse	Gender			
	Men		Women	
	Young old n (%)	Old-old n (%)	Young old n (%)	Old-old n (%)
High	2 (13.3)	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)	4 (26.7)
Medium	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	9 (60)	10 (66.7)
Low	6 (40)	3 (20)	4 (26.7)	1 (6.7)

The results stipulated that more than fifty per-cent of the elder or older or grown up men and women respondents were

experiencing medium level of Elder abuse followed by high and low.

Interestingly, majority of the older adults (old-old) were facing high level of abuse. This was due to economic dependence which resulted in no choices for them but survive in whatever conditions there in the family. The elderly women sometimes were experiencing abusive situations like not having enough adequate health care. Irrespective of age and gender family members sense uncomfortable with the existence of elderly in rural areas. The high levels of older abuse had resulted in low levels of well-being in emotional, psychological, social, physical well-being dimensions. Similar findings were supported by Srinivasan (2014) [6].

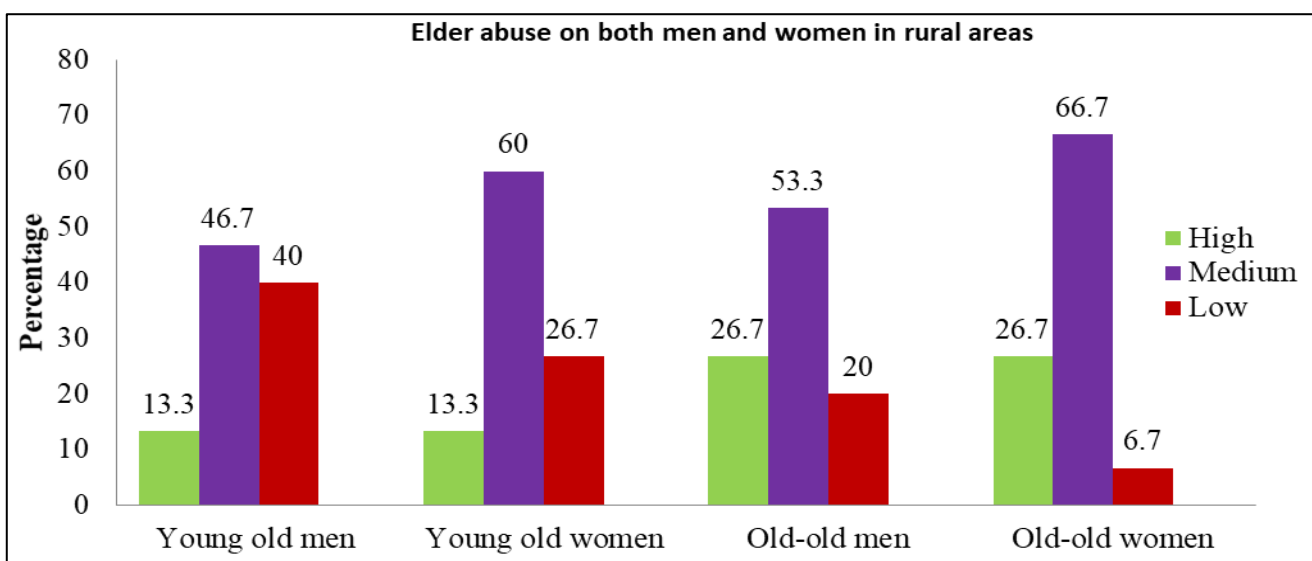


Fig 2: Elder abuse on both men and women in rural areas

Table 3: Mean differences of elder abuse based on residential area.

N=120

S.No	Area	Age	Mean	S.D	Z-Value
1.	Rural	Young old	5.9	1.768	1.644
		Old-old	8.36	2.370	
2.	Urban	Young old	6.36	2.894	2.326*
		Old-old	10.633	1.790	

The magnitude of elder abuse was appeared high among old-old elderly compared to young old in rural areas. However, no significant observed in two age groups of elderly. In urban areas old-old elderly were mistreated more than young old resulting in a significant difference. This was due to economic dependency on family and chronic diseases. Most of elderly people at this stage were living in vulnerable conditions. When compared to the type of area of both age groups the rural old-old elderly experienced high level of elder abuse than urban respondents.

Conclusion

The study inferred that irrespective of area and gender, both young old and old-old elderly were experiencing elder abuse. However, rural senior citizens had less abuse than urban elderly. Comparatively young old elderly had less elder abuse than the old-old elderly. The findings of the research indicate that need for suitable intervention strategies and programme to decrease the elder abuse and provide a quality of life to the elderly.

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