

## A Study To Assess The Warning Signs Of Dementia Among Geriatric People

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### I. Introduction

Dementia is a neurodegenerative condition associated with decreased memory, reasoning ability, judgment capacity and language which interferes with a person’s day to day activities. Worldwide more than 36 million people are suffering with dementia, amongst them 3.7 million are from India. In India the total cost for the treatment of dementia is about Rs. 14,700 crores. When the numbers are expected to be doubled by 2030, the cost would increase three times.

Dementia occurs more commonly among elderly than in the middle-aged. It increases with age from 0.1 percent in those below 60 years of age to 15 to 20 percent in those at 80 years of age. It is not a psychiatric illness, but a progressive neurodegenerative disorder with psychiatric features. There is no cure for this disease, but medication can reduce symptoms and prevent further damage in the early stages. The professionals need to address this symptom at an early stage to make the dementia- free healthy ageing. Hence this study is undertaken to plan support program and counseling services.

### II. Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the presence of warning signs of dementia among geriatric population
2. Plan care giver support program and counseling services

### III. Methodology

Research design : Descriptive cross sectional design  
 Population : Geriatric population living in rural community  
 Setting : Rural village under Primary Health Centre  
 Sample size : 30  
 Sampling technique : Convenience sampling  
 Instrument : 1. Demographic data 2. Structured interview  
 Method of data collection : Interview

Data analysis : Descriptive statistics

### IV. Results

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables (N=30)**

S.No.	Variables	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	<b>Age (years)</b>		
	a. 60 – 65	11	36.7
	b. 66 – 70	13	43.3
	c. >71	06	20.0
2.	<b>Sex</b>		
	a. Male	18	60.0
3.	<b>Marital status</b>		
	a. Married	23	76.7
4.	<b>Education</b>		
	a. Non literate	15	50.0
	b. Primary	05	16.7
	c. Secondary	08	26.7
	d. Undergraduate	02	06.6
5.	<b>Occupation</b>		
	a. Nil	15	50.0
	b. Coolie	04	13.4
	c. Former	03	10.0
	d. Clerical	01	03.3
	e. Teacher	01	03.3
	f. Home maker	06	20.0

Table 1 reveals that 43.3% (13) of the geriatric were in the age group of 66 – 70years, majority, 60% (18) of them were male, 76.7% (23) were married, 50% (15) were non illiterate and not working

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of presence of warning signs of dementia (N=30)**

S. No.	Variables	Present (%)	Absent (%)
1.	Recent memory loss that affects job skills	70	30
2.	Problems completing familiar tasks	47	53
3.	Language/communication difficulties	53	47
4.	Disorientation to person ,place and time	50	50
5.	Problems with abstract thinking	53	47
6.	Lapses in judgment	60	40
7.	Misplacing things and suspicion of theft	57	43
8.	Change of mood behavior	60	40
9.	Change in personality	27	73
10.	Apathy/loss of initiative	50	50

Table 2 reveals that majority of geriatric individuals had presence of warning signs of dementia except change for personality. These changes affected the performance in job was the primary problem followed by change in mood and problem in decision making. Absence of warning signs of dementia may be due to their strong supportive system.

#### **Limitations**

- Answers were obtained by oral response
- Sample selection

#### **Recommendations**

- Replication of the study on larger population
- Interventional study can be done by giving caregivers' support program and counseling services

### **V. Conclusion**

Though the geriatric population show the signs of dementia at the minimal percentage on many aspects, their problems can be decreased to a lower level by organizing support program and counseling services.

### **References**

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