

# Knowledge, Attitude and Practices about the Elderly Care and Elderly Abuse among the Medical and Dental Students

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## Abstract

**Background:** One of the leading causes of mortality in old age is chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease so people leave their elderly in hospital alone, this decrease their enthusiasm in healthy living moreover many times as a medical facility, we forget about how to take care and sympathize old age problem. We forget it's not just the disease that is killing them but sense of negligence that making their life hollow.

**Aim:** To study the knowledge, attitude and practice related to elderly care and their insecurities among MBBS students of 2019 and BDS students 2019 batch

**Objective:** To assess the level of knowledge about elderly care and problems faced by them.

To assess attitude of students towards the geriatric population.

To assess the practice related to prevention elderly abuse.

**Result:** Elderly abuse is at a great high in our society with majority of the abuse done by their own children. Highest form of abuse was neglect (45.64%). 59.21% of elderly people didn't receive any help from anyone. Elderly people are considered a huge burden to family for majority of students (76.32%).

**Conclusions:** it is very important that awareness regarding the elderly care and elderly abuse should be spread at the primary level i.e. in schools, and students must be encouraged to inculcate the knowledge and respect towards the elderly care, and the government should enforce proper laws and penalties for the same.

**Keywords:** elderly care, elderly abuse, grandparents insecurities

## Introduction

Elderly or old age consists of persons who have surpassed or about to surpass the average life span of human beings. Elderly are generally considered as a person who is of age 60 years or above.<sup>1</sup>Old age is a part of life after youth and middle age, it could also

define as a process of deterioration in the functional capacity of an individual that results from structural changes, with advancing age. There is no exact age that can be concluded after which old age will start, however different countries and societies consider old age in between mid 40s to 70s. Today the world old age population is 617million which is 8.5 percent of the total world population. By 2020, for the first time in history, the number of people aged 60 years and older will outnumber children younger than 5years. according to new report of "an aging world:2015", this percentage is projected to jump to nearly 17 percent of the world's

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population by 2050 (1.6 billion).<sup>2</sup>

In INDIA, the old age or senior citizen mean any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty and above. According to Population census 2011 there are nearly 104million old age population which account for 16.8 percent of world total old age population; 53 million females and 51 million males. A report released by United Nations Population Fund and Helpage India suggests that number of elderly person is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026.<sup>3</sup>

Elderly abuse is considered a single or repeated act occurring between any relationship where there should be trust which directly or indirectly causes harm or stress to an old age person. It can be of various types: physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, financial or simply neglect.<sup>4</sup>

Old age comprises a huge number in world population so it is important to look after the health of old people. We are taking this topic due to the rise in negligence of care of old age people. Taking this topic we want to know the knowledge, attitude and perception of medical student towards old age. According to study by Agewell Foundation reveals ugly truth about old age in India. It states that After retirement many elderly people are forced to live a life of humiliation, abuses and isolation.<sup>7</sup>

Going through the various studies we came across a journal about conditions of 400 community dwelling older adults aged 65 and above in Chennai, India. The prevalence rate of mistreatment was 14%. Chronic verbal abuse was the most common followed by financial abuse and the rate of physical abuse and neglect was similar. Among the mistreated, exactly half of them had experienced more than one type of mistreatment (multifaceted-mistreatment).<sup>5</sup>

Negligence not only effect patients medical conditions but it cause severe effect on person psychology and appearance and may lead to Diogenes Syndrome. A study of elderly patients (fourteen men, sixteen women) who were admitted to hospital with acute illness and extreme self-neglect revealed common features which might be called Diogenes syndrome.<sup>6</sup> Cessation of normal skin cleansing seen in geriatric or self-neglected patients can cause accumulation of keratinous crusts

on the skin. In the extreme end of this spectrum is a condition known as Diogenes syndrome (DS). These patients may have psychiatric disorders like paranoid disorders, mood affection, or temporo-frontal dementia.

37% of elderly people are badly treated, 20% has restricted social life, 13% abuse/mentally torture, 13% are denied of basic needs, 9% are physically harassed, and 8% are affected by other form of harassment like emotional blackmailing, snatching their belonging, even saving, useful legal document.<sup>7</sup>

Study of UN suggested that majority of the elderly in India do not get long-term and palliative care.<sup>8</sup>This study help us to know that whether medical student have interest in taking elderly medicine. In country like India (developing country) there is extreme prevalence of communicable disease and non-communicable disease (known as diabetic capital of the world) which cause lack of immunity and increase in morbidity. So it is essential to take care of elderly people because nobody wants that 8.9% of world population is living in morbidity/illness. It is an interventional study. Through a presentation we will try to encourage student of medicine to be concerned about elderly people. To know about the right of old people. To give them knowledge of home care of old age.

## Material and Method

**Study Setting:** Subharti University, Meerut.

**Study Population:** Students of age group 18-21 years

**Study Design:** Cross Sectional Study

**Sample Size:** 400 students (200 students of MBBS and BDS each)

**Sampling Technique:** Convenient sampling

**Inclusion Criteria:** Students who were present and willing to participate

**Exclusion Criteria:** Students who were absent or not willing to participate

**Data Analysis:** With the use of Microsoft Excel, statistical analysis and representation through graphs

**Duration of the study:** 2Months

**Development of questionnaire:** A pre-designed, pre-validated semi structured questionnaire was used. Questionnaire was divided into 3 sections i.e. knowledge, attitude and practice of students regarding elderly abuse

**Informed consent:** informed consent was obtained from all the individuals participated

**Ethical Clearance** – Ethical clearance got from institutional ethics committee

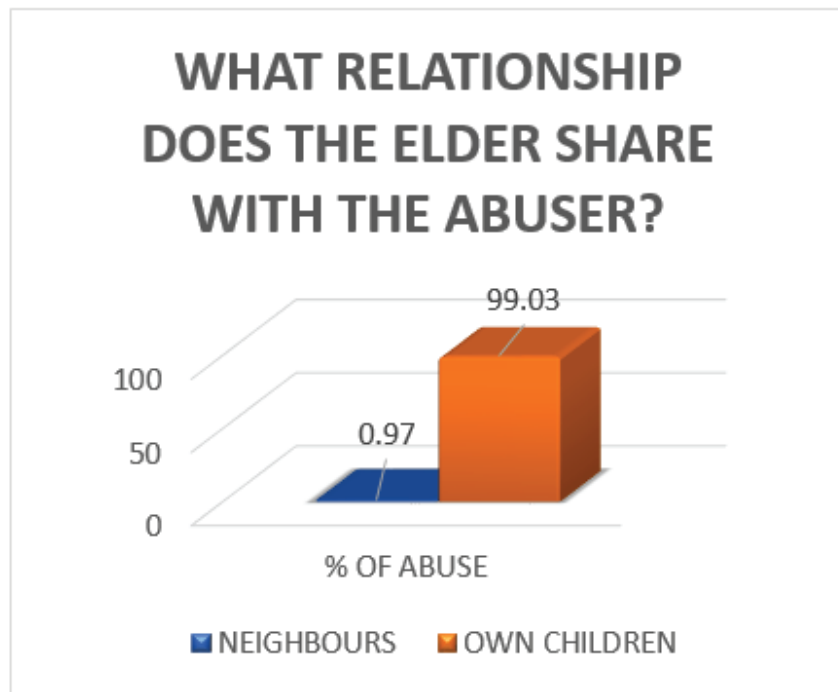
**Statistical Analysis:** The data was entered and analyzed using statistical package SPSS Version 17. Results were tabulated in percentages and proportions.

**Result**

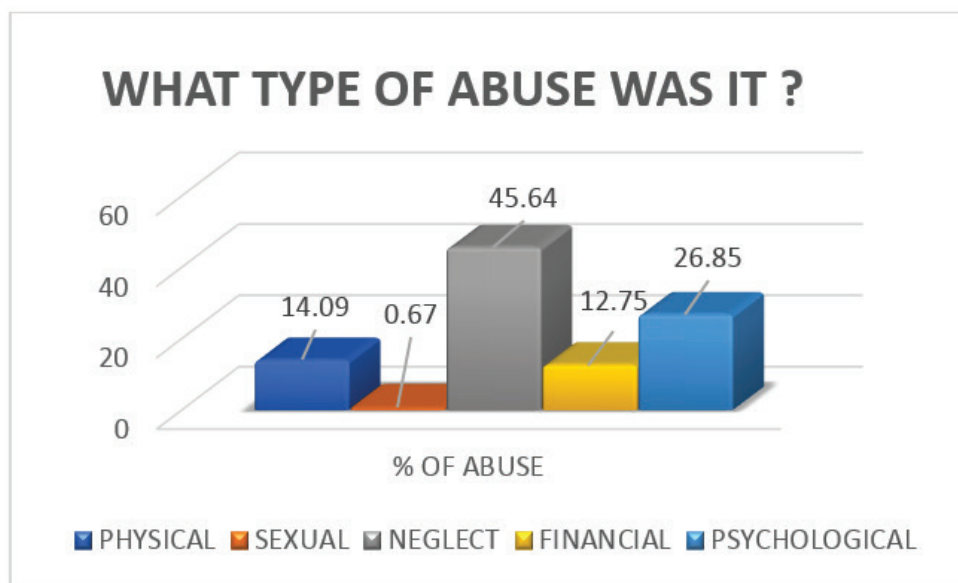
Elderly abuse is at a great high in our society with majority of the abuse done by their own children. Highest form of abuse was neglect. More than half of elderly people didn't receive any help from anyone. Elderly people are considered a huge burden to family for majority of families. The prevalence of elderly abuse among student is described in table 1. The figure 1 describes the relation of abused with elderly and figure 2 describes the type of elderly abuse. Table 2 describes about elderly care among student whereas figure 3 describes the attitude of students regarding elderly care.

**Table-1: HAVE YOU SEEN ANY CASE OF ELDERLY ABUSE?**

RESPONSE	NO. OF STUDENTS (%)
YES	63.15
NO	36.85



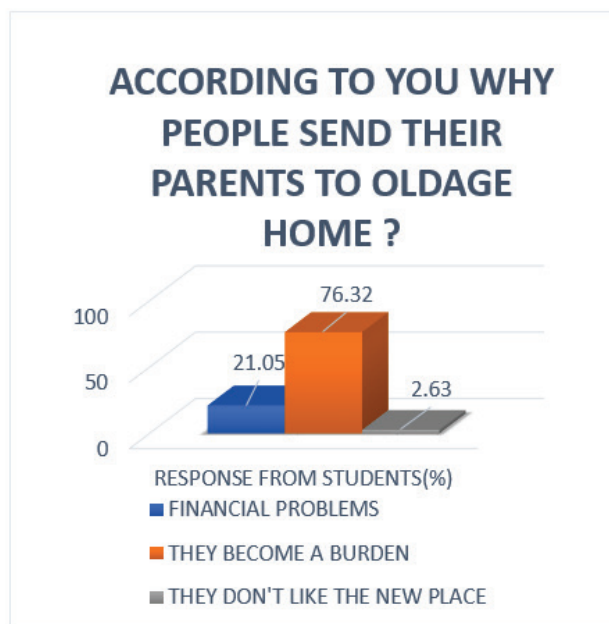
**Figure-1: WHAT RELATIONSHIP DOES ELDER SHARE WITH THE ABUSER?**



**Figure-2: WHAT TYPE OF ABUSE WAS IT?**

**Table-2: DID THEY RECEIVE ANY HELP FROM OTHERS?**

RECEIVED HELP	RESPONSE FROM STUDENTS (%)
YES	40.79
NO	59.21



**Figure-3: ACCORDING TO YOU WHY PEOPLE SEND THEIR PARENTS TO OLDAGE HOME?**

## Discussion

The main aim of our study was to assess the awareness of elderly care and elderly abuse in medical students and to see the increasing prevalence of elderly abuse in our society as stated by Agewell foundation is their previous studies. Around 1 in 6 people of 60 years and older experienced some form of abuse in community settings during past few years. Elderly abuse can lead to serious physical injuries and long term psychological consequences. Elderly abuse is an important public health problem and need to deal with. The type of abuse includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial and neglect.

Majority of these cases go unreported throughout the year and the prevalence rate is increasing day by day specially in rapidly ageing populations. Though many institutions are working for betterment of elderly it is seen that the rates of abuse are much higher in institutions as compared to community settings.

According to 64 percent of elderly people, loneliness, marginalization and isolation were the most critical issues faced by the bedridden patients as they cannot meet and interact with their relatives and family. Sebastian Det al<sup>9</sup> noticed that older person who were mistreated in family experienced a range of emotional, psychological distress and physical symptoms. Anger related health issues, demoralization, heat sensation are also related to the neglect it is important to recognize the power of multidimensional challenges caused by elder mistreatment in health and well being.

Juan Manuel Carmona- Torres et al<sup>10</sup> stated that the most common type of abuse noticed was psychological, followed by neglect. But in our study, it was vice-versa i.e. neglect was the most common type of abuse followed by psychological.

It was seen that many people have started living without their parents as a nuclear family so children's have stopped understanding the importance of elders in their life and respecting them. Also it's very hard to believe but majority of the cases of elderly abuse involved their own children and no one else.

We should understand that elderly people should be properly taken care of as they are an important part of the family and it's an inevitable fact that one day everyone has to grow old. Elderly people require special love and care and should not be neglected as such

## Conclusion

We got to analyze that among 400 students; 63.5% of all medical students had seen cases of elderly abuse, which is a matter of concern throwing light on the prevalence of this grave issue. Another finding suggested that majority of abuse was from their own children of the respective elderly people. The highest form of abuse was neglect followed by psychological abuse. The main reason for people sending their parents to old age home was that they became a burden and the most dreadful insecurity analyzed by medical students in elderly was emotional

So, in the nutshell, it's the need of the hour that awareness regarding the elderly care should be spread at the primary level i.e. in schools, and students must be encouraged to inculcate the knowledge and respect towards the elderly care, and the government should enforce proper laws and penalties for the same.

**Conflict of Interest :** None

**Source of Funding :** Self

**Ethical Clearance:** The study was approved by institutional ethical committee.

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