Socio-Demographic Correlates of Well-being of Elderly in a Rural Community in North Central Nigeria, Sub-Sahara Africa.

ABSTRACT

Background

Globally, the population of elderly is increasing and their well-being is becoming a public health concern. In Nigeria, poverty is widespread and elderly persons are more at risk, however, there is no national social security programme to provide support in old age. Therefore, the well-being of elderly is compromised. Information on factors influencing elderly well-being is scarce. Consequently, the study was conducted to identify the socio-demographic correlates of well-being of the elderly in Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria.

Methods

The study was cross-sectional in design. A 3-stage (political ward, community, household) cluster sampling technique was used to select 1217 consenting elderly persons aged 65+ from the 15 wards in Ijumu Local Government Area. A pre-tested, interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect information on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Each of the four domains of well-being (physical, psychological, social, and environmental) was assessed using a 5-point likert scale. Thereafter, the overall well-being was derived by summing up scores for the four domains. Mean score was used to disaggregate the overall well-being scores into good (> mean score) or poor (≤ mean score). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance test, and logistic regression at 5% level of significance.

Results

The mean age of the respondents was 72.3±8.4 years. 96.5% were Yoruba, 65.2% were females, 71.3% were currently married and 69.3% were Christians. About 18.3% had at least secondary education while 52.5% had no formal education. 55.3% of the elderly had poor overall well-being (physical (41.0%), psychological (46.7%), social (51.1%), and environmental (52.9%)). Age, gender, marital status, level of education, family type, past occupation, current working status and current place of work were significantly associated with elderly good well-being. Good well-being among the elderly decreases with age. Elderly males were more likely than females to experience good well-being (OR=1.5, C.I=1.2-1.9). Elderly who were currently married were more likely to experience good well-being than those who are not currently married (OR=2.3, C.I=1.8-3.0). The likelihood of good well-being was lower among elderly with no formal education (OR=0.2, C.I=0.1-0.3) than those with at least secondary level of education. Elderly who were from monogamy family were more likely (OR= 1.6, C.I=1.3-2.0) to experience good well-being than their counterparts from polygamous family. Currently working elderly were more likely to experience good well-being (OR= 2.1, C.I= 1.6-2.6) than not currently working. Among the currently working elderly, the odd of good well-being was lower among self employed (OR=0.5, C.I=0.3-0.8) than others who were working in either private or public establishments.

Conclusion

The overall well-being of elderly in the community was fair and elderly ≥85 years old were at higher risk. Marital status, level of education, family type, current working status, current place of work and reason for not currently working were the major factors influencing elderly well-being. Government should develop health and financial policies aimed at improving well-being of the elderly.

Keywords: Elderly well-being, physical health status, psychological health status.