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Awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens

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Abstract

The present study was aimed to assess awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens in selected health centers of Kottayam district. A quantitative non experimental research approach was used for the study. The study was theoretically supported by Nola J Pender's revised health promotion model. Sample size was 400 senior citizens came to OPD were selected by multi stage random sampling. The tools used for data collection were socio personal data sheet, structured interview schedule to assess the awareness regarding geriatric welfare services, rating scale to assess the utilization of geriatric welfare services and semi structured interview to identify the reasons for non-utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens. Study revealed that 10% of the senior citizens had good awareness, majority (72.20%) had average awareness and 17.80% had poor awareness regarding geriatric welfare services. Majority (90.20%) have not utilized the geriatric welfare services. Major reasons for non-utilization of geriatric welfare services were lack of knowledge, lack of timely updation and delay in processing from the concerned authority. There was significant association between awareness and utilization regarding geriatric welfare services for senior citizens with age, gender, education, occupation, type of family, economic status, annual income, colour of ration card and source of information.. An information booklet on geriatric welfare services was prepared and given to senior citizens who participated in the study.

Keywords: Awareness, utilization, geriatric welfare services, senior citizens

1. Introduction

People worldwide are living a longer life. Today most people expect to live into their sixties and beyond. Every country in the world is experiencing growth in both size and proportion of older persons in the population.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), old age denotes decrease in an individual's environmental compliance ability out of his or her control and chronologically defines individuals aged 65 years and older. Therefore, WHO, with its baseline report, clearly sets the stage for the acquisition and provision of such data to monitor global progress towards healthy ageing and provides the methods for measuring healthy ageing in a population, beyond disease inventories and analyses of activities and instrumental activities of daily living ^[1]. According to National policy on older persons, senior citizens mean any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above ^[2]. In 2022, it was found that there are 771 million people aged 65 years or over globally. The older population is projected to reach 994 million by 2030 and 1.6 billion by 2050 ^[3].

Elderly population suffers from income loss, decreased social role and increased dependence along with social role and mental problems associated with ageing ^[4]. Geriatric welfare services are aimed to address this problem related to old age. The main focus of the existing geriatric welfare service is the elderly population below the poverty line ^[5].

2. Objectives

1. To assess the awareness regarding geriatric welfare services among senior citizens.
2. To determine utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens.
3. To find out correlation between awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens.
4. To find out association of awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among

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senior citizens with selected variables

3. Materials and Methods

A quantitative non experimental research approach was considered for the study. The study was conducted in four health centres of Ettumanoor block which were selected using multi stage random sampling. Sample consists of 400 senior citizens aged above 60 years attending OPD in selected health centers of Ettumanoor block. All senior citizens male and female above 60 years, who are willing to participate in the study was included in the study. Socio personal data was collected using socio personal data sheet, then structured interview was used to assess the awareness regarding welfare services. Then the investigator interviewed senior citizens to determine the utilization of geriatric welfare services by using a rating scale. The data collected were organized, tabulated and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

4. Results

4.1 Socio personal data of senior citizens

Among the 400 senior citizens, 47.7% were in the age group of 60-64 years where as 38.8% belongs to 65-74 age group and majority (61.20%) were males. Study also revealed that 45.70% had only informal education and 44.8% had primary education. Seventy five percent of senior citizens belonged to nuclear family. Regarding economic status 92.80% senior

citizens belonged to BPL category. The study showed that, 68.50% of senior citizens holds pink colour ration card (Priority ration card).The study revealed that 43.20% of senior citizens received information regarding geriatric welfare services from television and 30% received information from newspaper and others from radio, friends, relatives, politicians and health workers.

4.2 Awareness of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens

Table 1: Frequency distribution and percentage of senior citizens based on awareness regarding geriatric welfare services (n = 400)

Level of awareness	f	%
Good (21-30)	40	10.00
Average (11-20)	289	72.20
Poor (0-10)	71	17.80

The mean score of awareness of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens was 13.76 with SD of 3.65. It also revealed that 10% of the senior citizens had good awareness, majority (72.20%) had average awareness and 17.80% had poor awareness regarding geriatric welfare services.

4.3 Utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens

Table 2: Frequency distribution and percentage of senior citizens based on domain wise utilization regarding geriatric welfare services (n = 400)

Domains of geriatric welfare services	Utilization					
	Good		Average		Poor	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Social security schemes	0	0	44	11.00	356	89.00
Special government facilities	0	0	307	76.80	93	23.20
Health insurance schemes	0	0	3	0.80	397	99.20

The study shows that mean score of utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens was 10.98 with SD of 1.46. It also shows that majority (90.20%) of senior citizens had poor utilization of geriatric welfare services and 9.80% of senior citizens had average utilization of geriatric welfare services. Based on domain wise utilization, the study shows that 11% of the senior citizens had average utilization and 89% had poor utilization regarding Social security schemes. Regarding Special government facilities, 76.80% had average utilization and 23.20% had poor utilization. Regarding utilization about health insurance schemes 0.80% of senior citizens had average utilization and 99.20% had poor utilization.

4.4 Correlation between awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens

Correlation between awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services was determined by Pearson correlation coefficient.

A significant moderate positive correlation (r =0.60; significance at 0.01 level. Hence it is inferred that as the awareness increases utilization also increases.

4.5 Association between awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens and selected variables

Awareness regarding geriatric welfare services for senior

citizens was significantly associated with age, gender, education, occupation, type of family, economic status and category of ration card. Utilization regarding geriatric welfare services for senior citizens was significantly associated with type of family, economic status and category of ration card and source of information.

Summary

The study on awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens was conducted in four health centers in Ettumanoor block. The study concluded that majority of senior citizens have average awareness but poor utilization of geriatric welfare services. There was significant association of awareness and utilization regarding geriatric welfare services among senior citizens with selected variables. Major reasons for non-utilization of geriatric welfare services among senior citizens were due to lack of knowledge about geriatric welfare services, lack of timely updation, delay in processing from the concerned authority, lack of support from the family, failure to submit documents as per norms and lack of interest to receive geriatric welfare services.

Conclusion

Study shows that there is a need to generate awareness regarding various schemes for the senior citizens among the

general public as a lot of gaps was observed in the awareness and utilization of these services.

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