

An Explorative Study to Analyze the Factors Affecting Abuses among Elderly At Selected District of Kerala, India

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Abstract: Elder abuse is a global social issue which affects the health and human rights of millions of older persons around the world. Purpose of the study was to explore and analyze the factors affecting abuses among elderly. The objectives of the study were to assess the socio-demographic data, to explore the factors affecting abuse and analyze the frequency of exposure to abuse. Quantitative approach with exploratory survey design was the methodology used in this study. This study was done at Kerala, India. Simple Random Sampling technique was used to collect data from 100 elderly. Semi structured interview schedule was used to collect socio-demographic data and factors affecting abuses among elderly. Rating scale was used to collect the information on frequency of exposure to abuse. Informed written consent was obtained from the subjects. Nearly half (42%) of the samples were between the age group of 71-80 years. 65% of them were females. 94% of them were exposed to one or other forms of abuses. 48 % and 22% of them were the victims of psychological and physical abuses respectively. 21% of the abuses were done by the husbands. 6% of the samples were daily exposed to abuses. Around 10 % of the subjects were sufferers of neglect and maltreatment. There was a significant association between socio-demographic variables and factors affecting abuses($P<.001$), so research hypothesis was accepted. Main recommendations of the study were to formulate "Abuse Cell" and "Multifaceted Team". Our aging population will require more care, love, affection and protection from their beloved ones. So we can "Add life to years and not just days to life"

Key Words: Explorative study, Analyze, Factors, Abuse, Elderly.

I. Introduction

The 21st century is one of profound challenges associated with dramatic increases in the numbers of people living longer. The United Nations has brought much needed attention to this "silent revolution," which has a profound impact on all societies. Elder abuse is a global social issue which affects the health and human rights of millions of older persons around the world and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community¹. Elder abuse is a global public health issue which exists in both developing and developed countries and is typically under reported.²

Abuse is one of the most common problems faced by the elderly in the state. Abuse as "a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person".³ The elder people were exposing different types of abuses, such as physical, psychological, sexual, financial and neglect.² In general, elder abuse is a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult.¹⁻²

Each year hundreds of thousands of older persons are abused, neglected, and exploited. Many victims are people who are older, frail, and vulnerable and cannot help themselves and depend on others to meet their most basic needs.⁴ Abusers of older adults are both women and men, and may be family members, friends, or "trusted others." The abuse of older people by family members dates back to ancient times. Elder abuse as psychological/ emotional, or physical maltreatment of the older person generally by family members or by institutional personnel.⁵

The prevalence of abuse was relatively higher among older elderly (80+) and those with low education and poor economic status. 21% of the older experienced elder abuse, neglect, or self-neglect in domestic settings⁶. As of 2010, 13 percent of the population was age 65 and older, with this group expected to comprise 19.3 percent of the population by 2030. In India prevalence rate of abuse was 14%.⁷⁻⁸

During the home visit the researcher identified that the older people were exposed to different types of abuses. Now a day's so many reports are coming in the Medias regarding elder abuse. Everybody recognized that it is a social issue. Majority of the cases the family members and relatives are the abusers. So the investigator felt that this is the most significant and relevant problem for research. Therefore the investigator decided to explore and analyze the factors related to abuse. Before starting the study the researcher was curious about this research problem. i.e. Why our elder people are getting abuses? From whom they are getting abuse? Where they are exposed to abuse? What type of abuse? How often they are getting abuses? Through the present study the investigator attempts to answer the above questions.

I.1 Statement of The Problem

An explorative study to analyze the factors affecting abuses among elderly at selected district of Kerala, India

I.2 Purpose of The Study

Purpose of the study was to explore and analyze the factors affecting abuses among elderly, which includes types, reason, sources, frequency, response and feelings of elderly towards abuse.

I.3 Objectives

1. To assess the socio -demographic data of the elderly
2. To explore the factors affecting abuses among elderly
3. To analyze the frequency of exposure to different types of abuses
4. To find out the association between socio-demographic variable and abuses among elderly

I.4 Hypothesis

H₁- There will be a significant association between socio-demographic variables and factors affecting abuses among elderly

II. Materials And Methods

Quantitative Research Approach with Explorative Survey Design was the methodology of this study. This study was done at Sasthamcotta, Poruvazhy and Mynagappally Panchayat of Kunnathoor Taluk, Kollam district of Kerala, India. Elderly People were the population of this study. The person those who are above the age of 60 years and residing at Kollam District were the sample. Simple Random Sampling Technique was used to collect data from 100 elderly people.

II.1 Research Tool

Tool I :Semi-structured Interview Schedule . This consists of two sections. Section I is on Socio- demographic factors of Elderly. It includes 15 questions. Section II was on factors affecting elder abuse such as source, types, reason, feelings and response towards abuse. This includes 12 questions.

Tool II – Rating Scale was to assess the frequency of exposure to different types of abuses among elderly. It includes 23 questions.

II.2 Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained from Tahasildar of Kunnathoor Taluk Office. Obtained informed written consent from the subjects. Throughout the study the investigator maintained privacy and confidentiality of the subjects. Along with this all other ethical principles were followed by the investigator.

II.3 Data Collection Process

After obtaining informed written consent from the sample the data was collected with the help of structured interview schedule and rating scale. Semi-structured Interview Schedule consists of two sections. Section I is on Socio- demographic factors of Elderly. Section II was on factors affecting elder abuse such as source, types, reason, feelings and response towards abuse. Rating Scale was to assess the frequency of exposure to different types of abuses among elderly. The data was collected from 12th March 2013 to 15th June 2013. The Researcher only collected all the data from the elderly.

II.4. Limitations of The Study

Even though the elderly people were suffering from different types of abuses, but they are not ready to open their mouth against their children and their beloved ones. They want to protect them.

III. Figures And Tables

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of Socio-demographic variables
n=100**

Socio-demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Age in Years		
60-70	40	40.0
71-80	42	42.0
81-90	18	18.0
Gender		
Male	35	35.0

Female	65	56.0
Religion		
Hindu	56	56.0
Muslim	28	28.0
Christian	16	16.0
Name of Panchayat		
Sasthamcotta	33	33.0
Poruvazhy	34	34.0
Mynagappally	33	33.0
Marital Status		
Married	66	66.0
Widow	30	30.0
Widowed	2	02.0
Unmarried	2	02.0

Table 1 depicts that among 100 samples, 42% of the samples were between the age group of 71-80 years but 18% of them were above 81 years. 65% of the samples were females. More than half (56%) of the subjects were belongs to Hindu religion. Regarding place, 34% of the sample from PoruvazhyPanchayat. 66% of the subjects were married but 30% were widows.

Table 2 : Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to Occupation and source of Income
n=100

Socio-demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Previous Occupation		
Govt. Employee	18	18.0
Private	7	07.0
House Wife	33	33.0
Others	26	26.0
Nil	16	16.0
Present Occupation		
Private	5	05.0
House wife	22	22.0
Others	9	09.0
Nil	62	62.0
Govt. Employee	2	02.0
Source of Income		
Retirement Pension	18	18.0
Job	10	10.0
Other Pension	39	39.0
Others	14	14.0
Nil	19	19.0

Table 2 depicts that 18% of the subjects were Retired Govt. Employees. 62% of the samples have no job. 39% of the subjects were getting different types of pension, but 10% of them were still working.

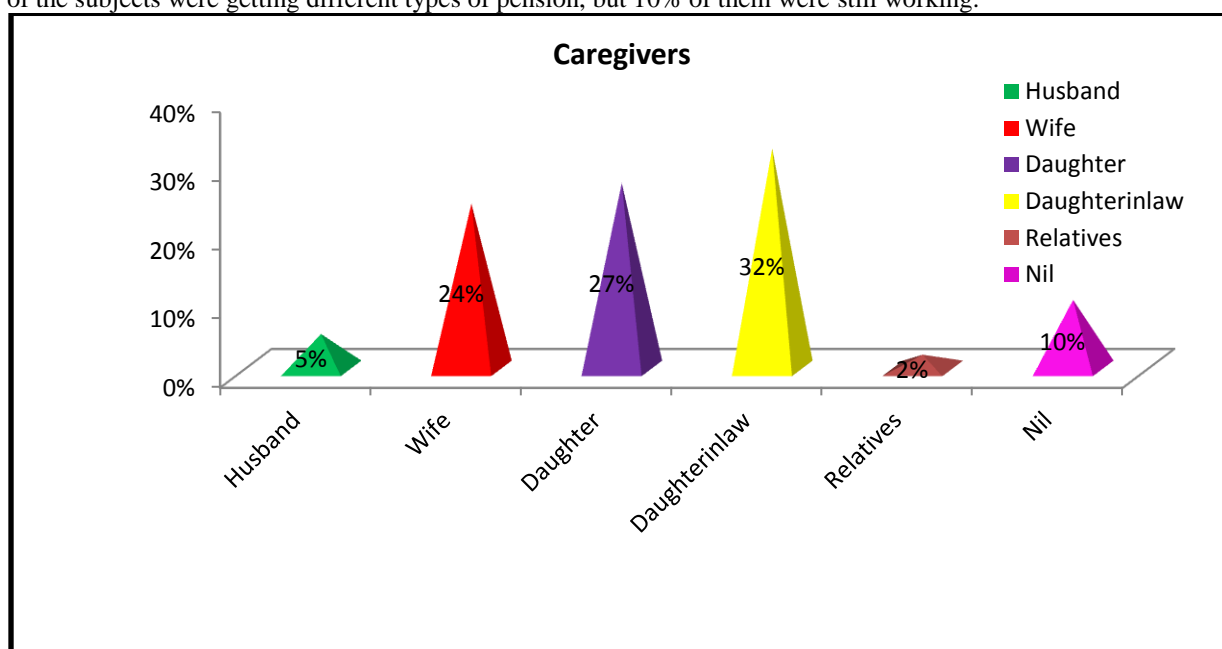


Figure 1: Care givers of Elderly

Figure 1 depicts that 32% of the care givers were daughter in laws, 24% of the caregivers were wives and 5% of them were husbands.

**Table 3: Frequency & percentage Distribution of subjects according to Factors affecting Abuse
n=100**

Abuse	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Experience on Abuse		
Yes	94	94.0
No	6	06.0
Source of Abuse		
Husband	21	21.0
Wife	17	17.0
Son	26	26.0
Daughter	13	13.0
Daughter in law	14	14.0
Relatives	03	03.0
Nil	06	06.0
Frequency of Abuse		
Daily	06	06.0
Weekly	35	35.0
Monthly	53	53.0
Never	06	06.0
Response Towards Abuse		
Keep quite	37	37.0
Use Abuse words	39	39.0
Beating others	2	02.0
Crying	14	14.0
Self Punishment	3	03.0
Nil	5	05.0
Feelings of the Victim		
Very Sad	54	54.0
Suicidal Ideation	09	09.0
Angry	28	28.0
No emotions	09	09.0

Table 3 shows that 94% of the samples were suffering from abuses. 21% of the abuses are mainly done by the husbands, 14%, 26% of the abuses are mainly done by daughter- in laws and sons respectively. 53% of the subjects are frequently getting abuses, and 6% of the samples are the victims of daily abuse. 39% of the samples were reacting towards abuse by using abuse words, but 37% of them were keeping quite. 54% of the victims were looking very sad after the incident but 28% of them were very angry and 9% of the subjects were thinking about suicide.

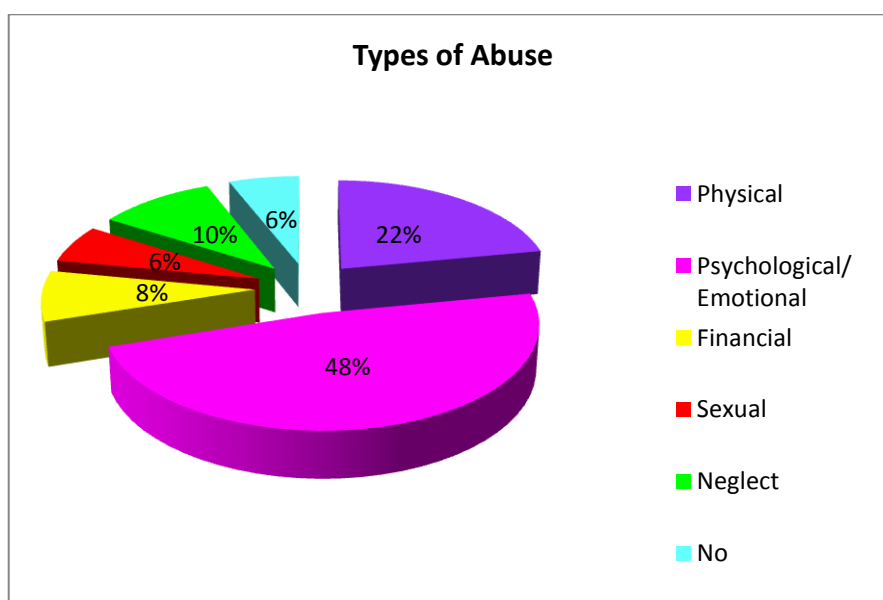


Figure 2 Types of Abuses

Figure 2 shows that, among 100 samples, 48 % of them were experiencing psychological abuses, 22 % them were victims of physical abuse and 6% of them were suffered from sexual abuse, 10% of them got neglect from their beloved ones. 8% of the subjects were suffering from financial abuse.

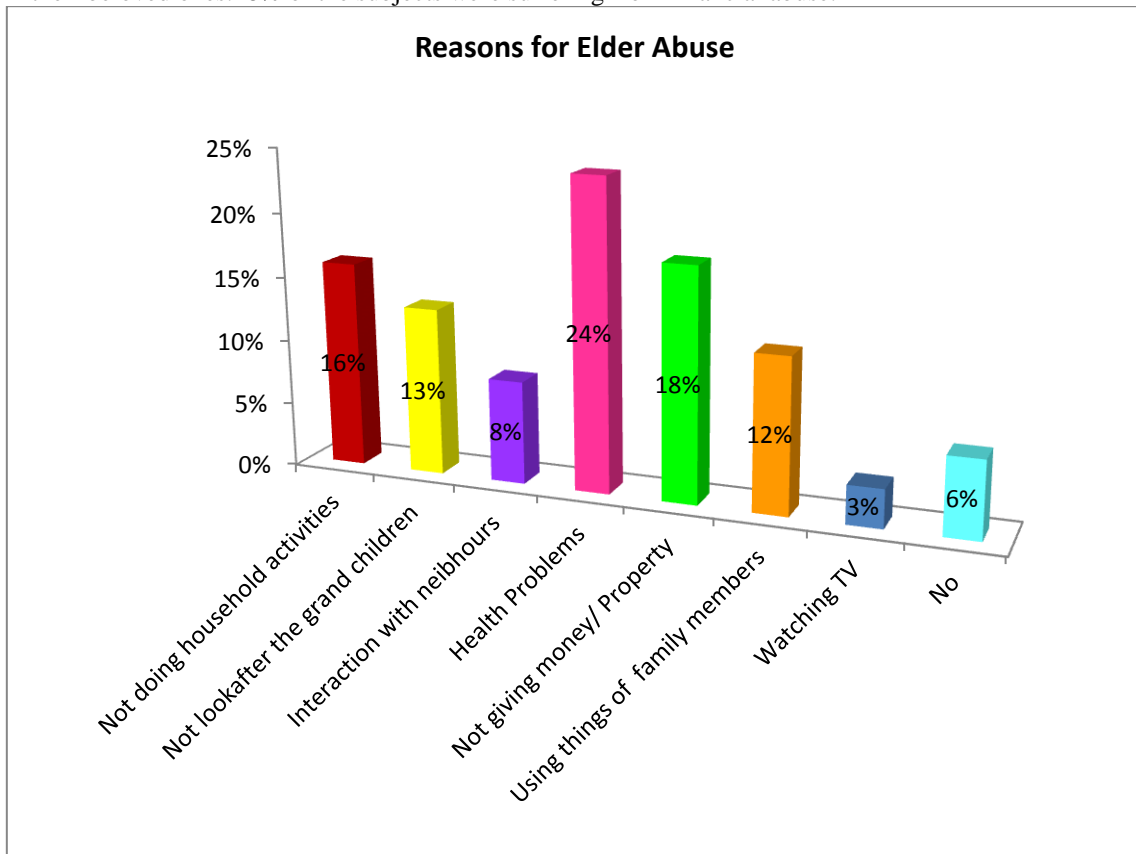


Figure 3: Reasons for Elder Abuse

Figure 3 depicts the reason for abuse, 24% of the subjects were having health problems, 16% of them were not doing any household activities but 18 % were not giving any money.

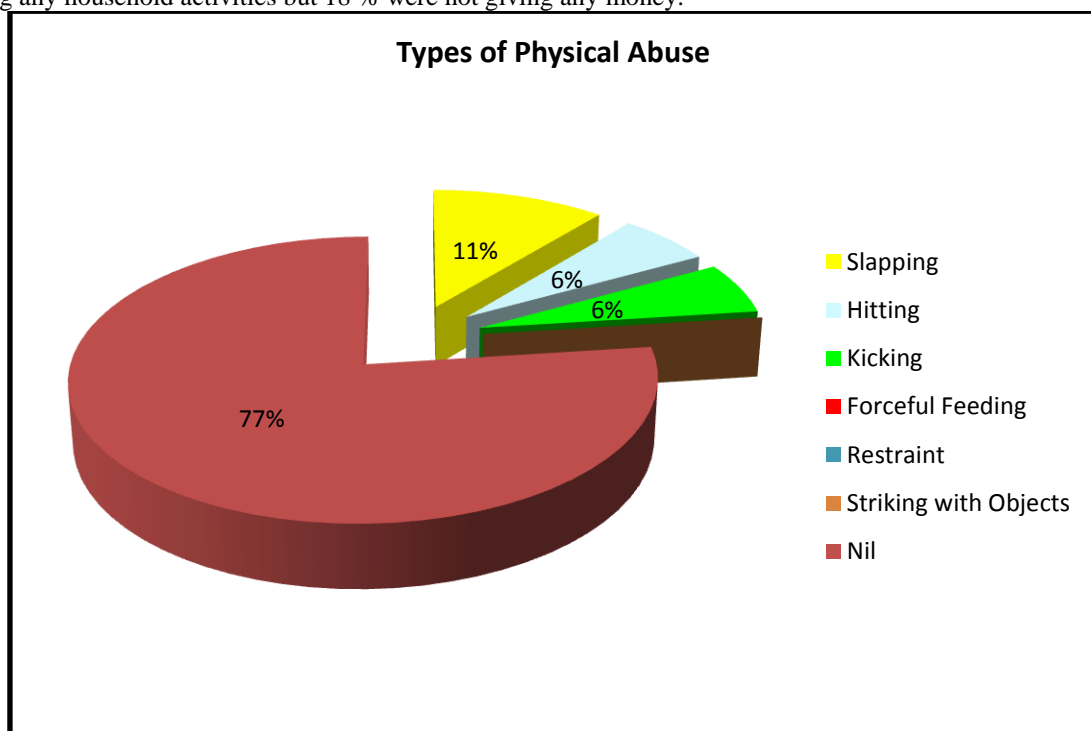


Figure 4: Types of Physical Abuse

Figure 4 Shows that 11% of the samples were suffered from slapping, 6% were getting hitting and kicking.

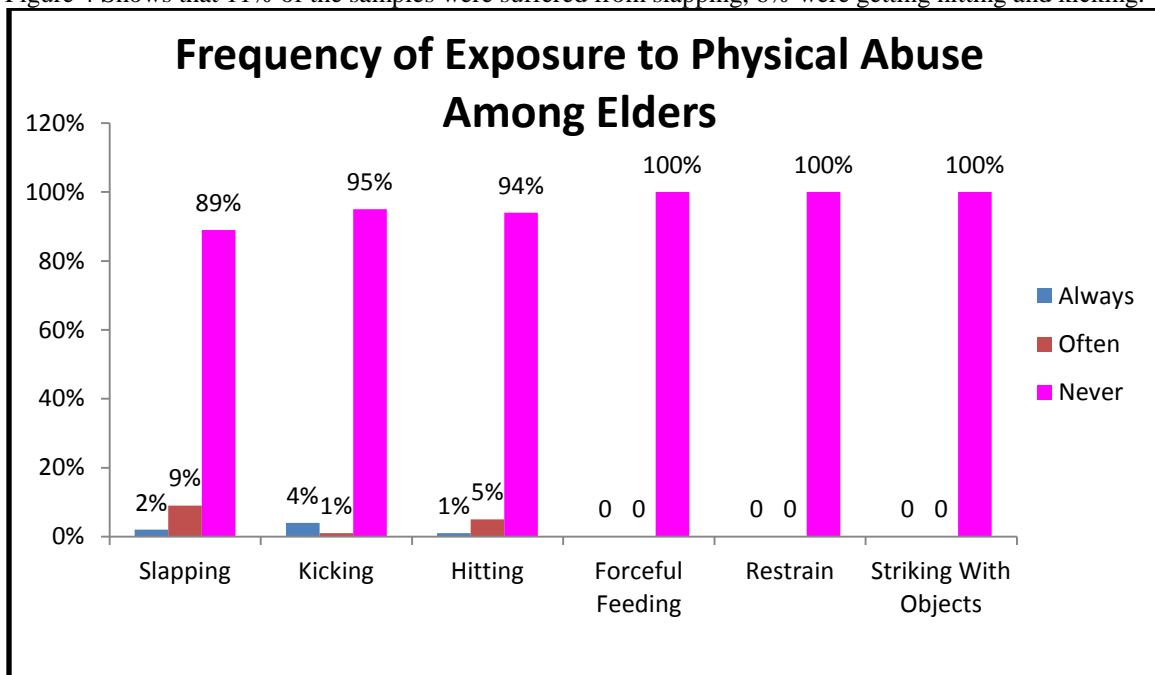


Figure 5: Frequency of Exposure to Types of Physical Abuse

Figure 5 depicts that frequency of exposure to physical abuses, 9% of the samples were exposed to slapping very often, 4% of the samples were always getting kicking and 5% of them were getting very often hitting.

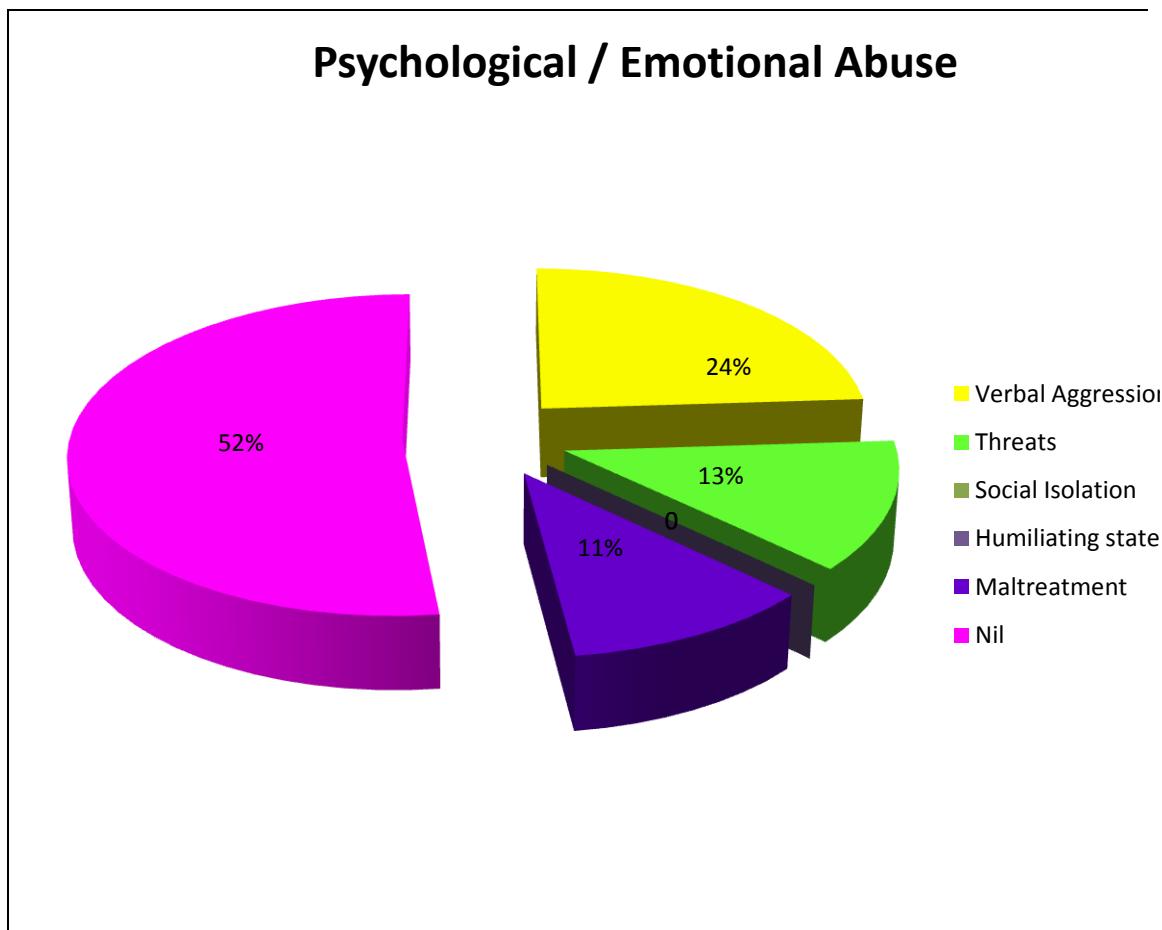


Figure 6: Psychological Abuses

Figure 6 shows that 24% of the samples were experiencing verbal aggression, 12% of them were experiencing different types of threats and 11% of them were suffer from maltreatment.

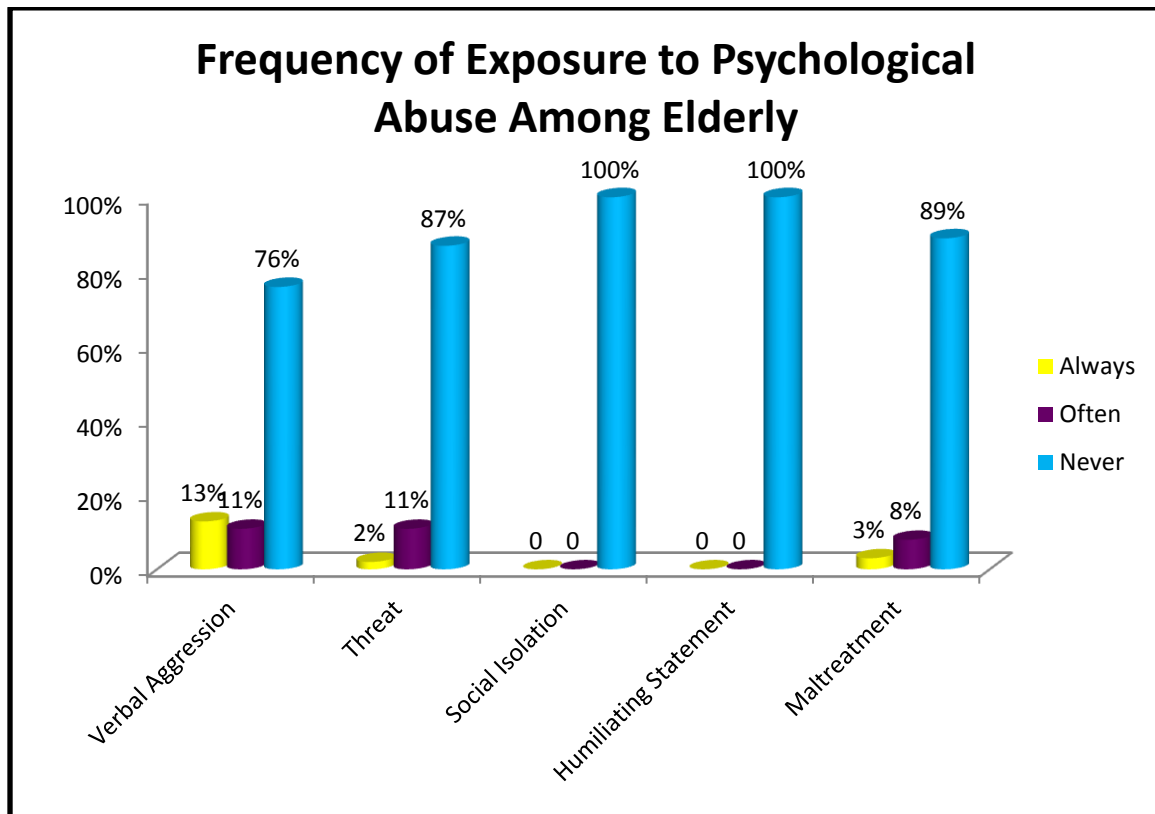


Figure 7: Frequency of Exposure to Psychological Abuses

Figure 7 depicts that, 11 % of the samples were getting threat and verbal aggression very often. 13% of them were always suffered from verbal abuse and 11% of the subjects were suffering from maltreatment.

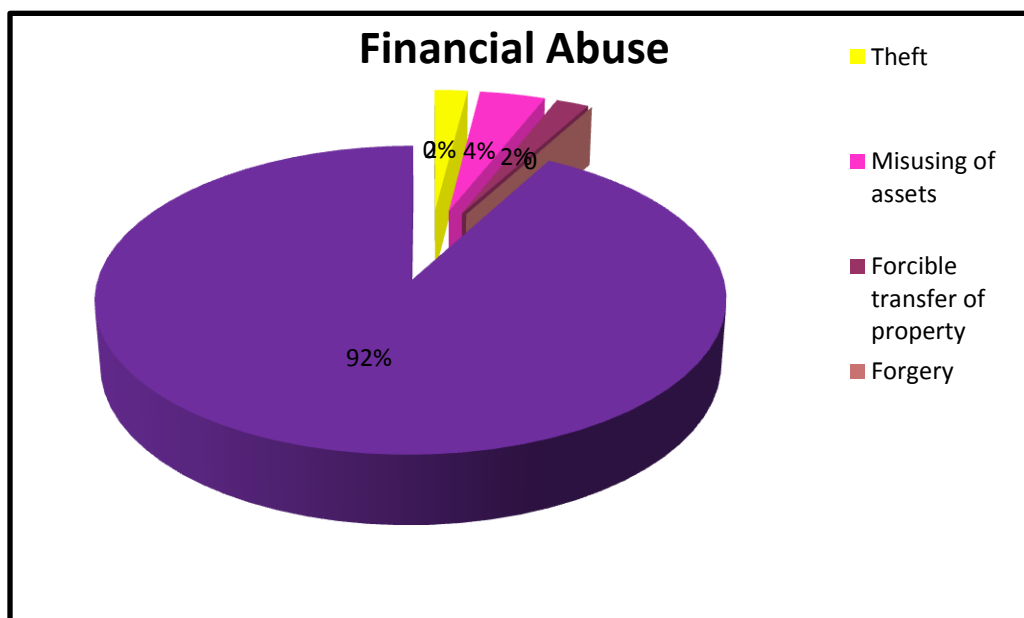


Figure 8: Financial Abuse

Figure 8 shows that 4% of the elders were suffered from misusing of assets 2% of them were victims of theft and 2% of them were under pressure of forcible transfer of property and money.

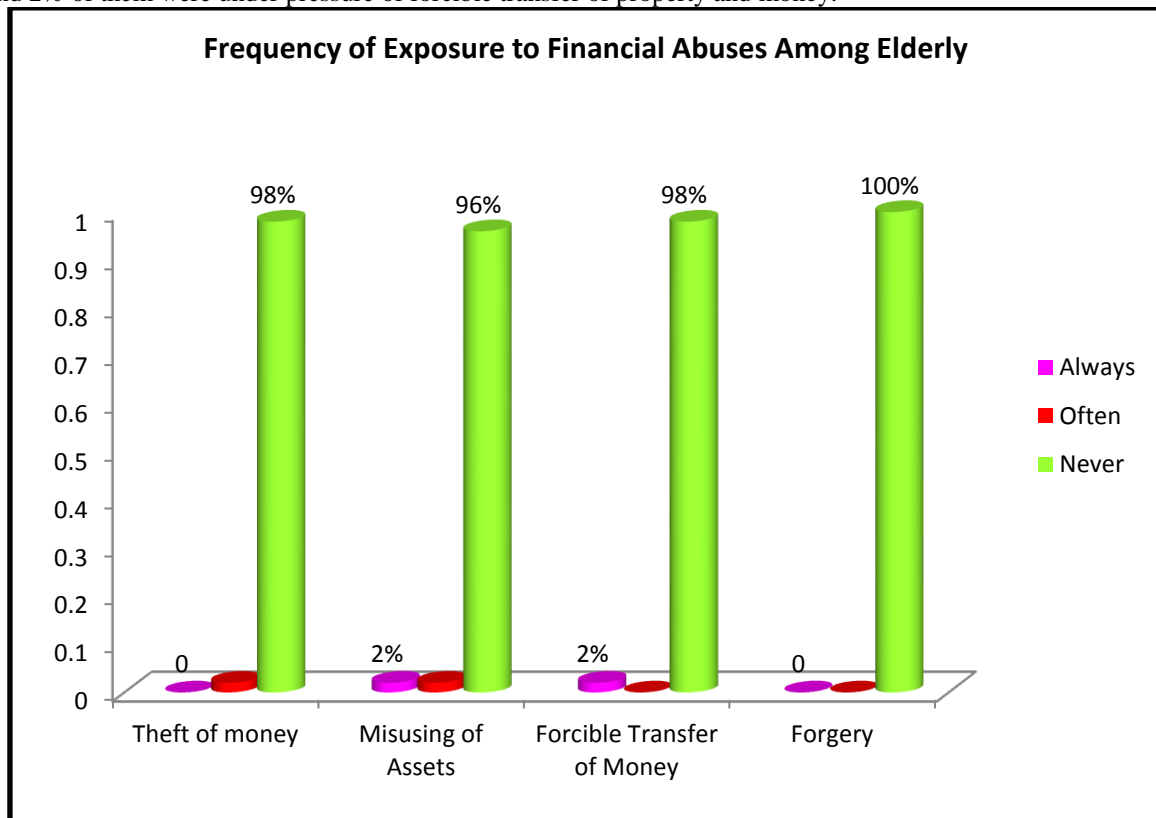


Figure 9: Frequency of Exposure to Financial Abuse

Figure 9 depicts that, 2% of subjects were always suffering from misusing of assets and forcible transfer of money and often the subjects were exposed to theft (2%).

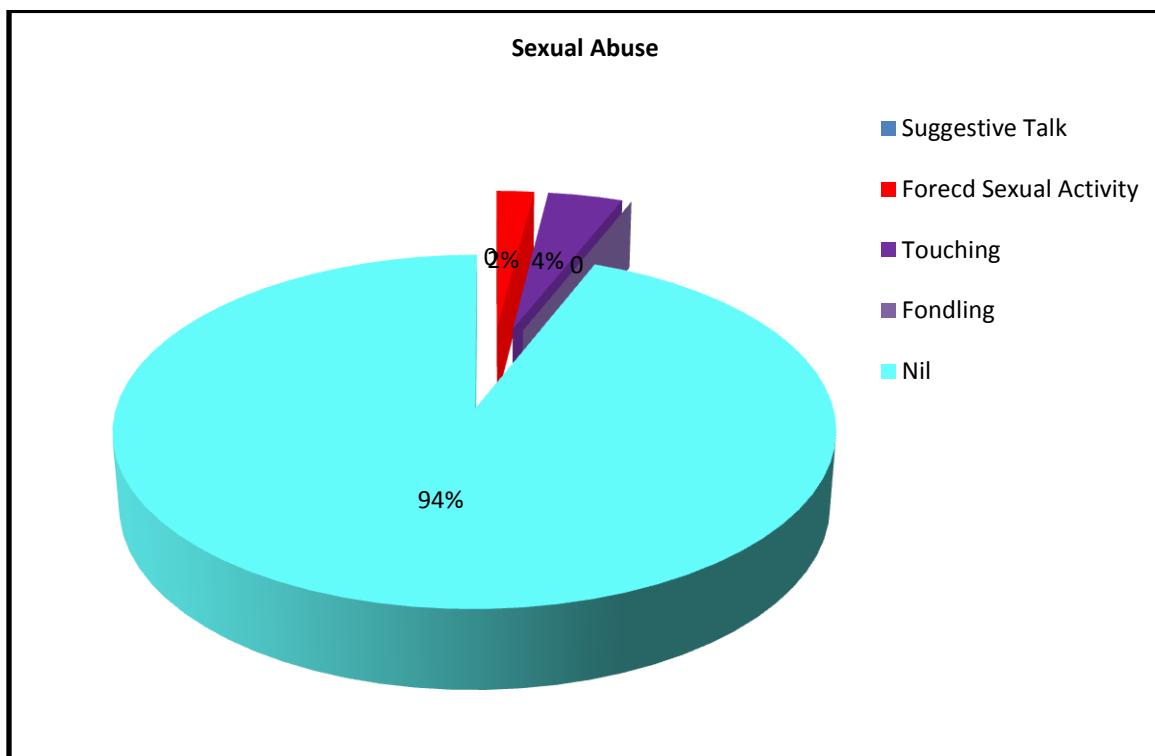


Figure 10: Sexual Abuse

Figure 10 shows that 2% of the elders were suffered from forced sexual activity and 4% of them were experiencing touching.

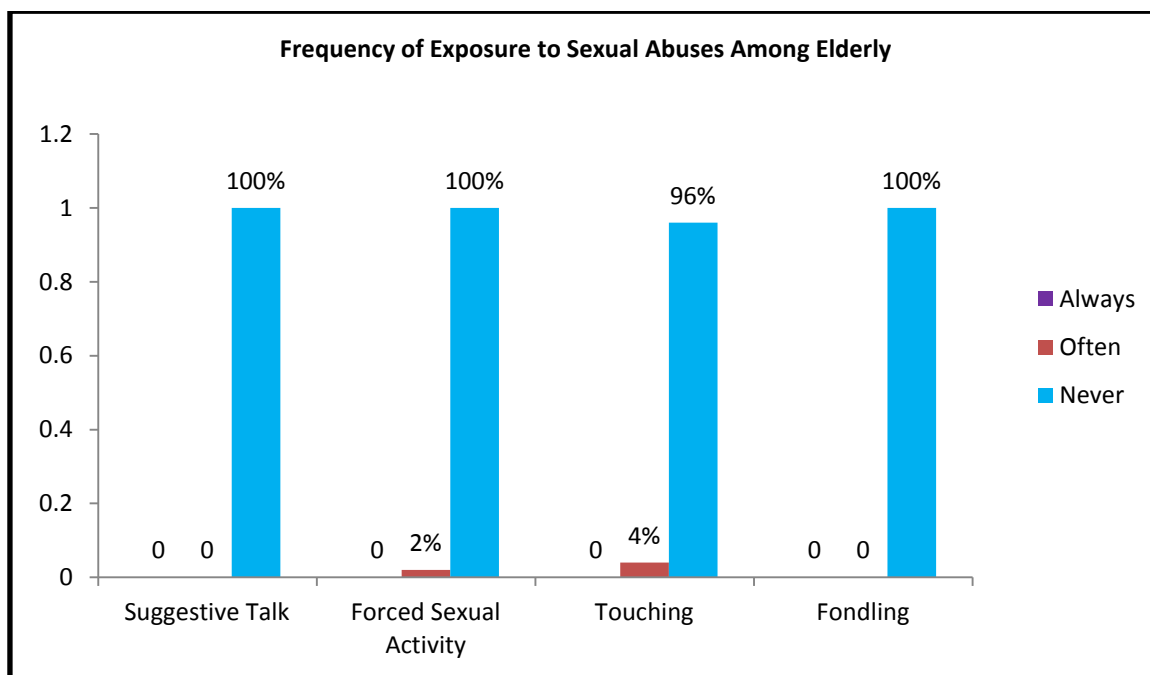


Figure 11: Frequency of Exposure to Sexual Abuse

Figure 11 depicts that, 2% of the subjects were very often experiencing forced sexual activity and 4% of them were victims of touching.

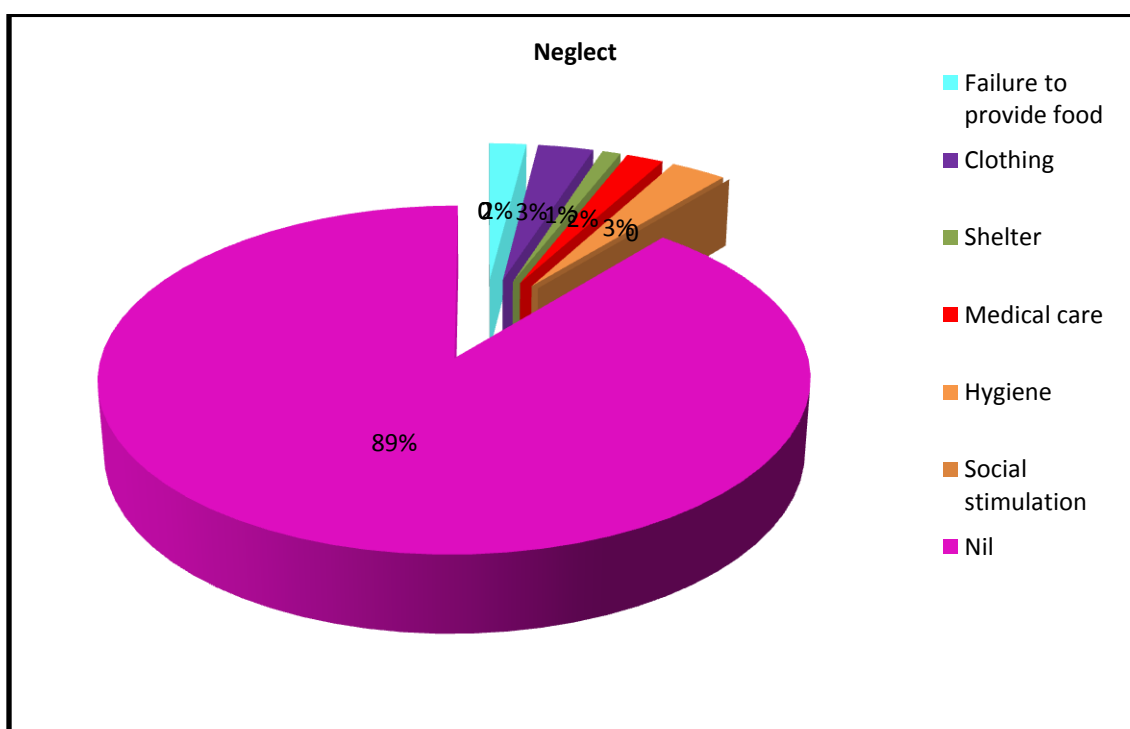


Figure12: Neglect

Figure 12 demonstrate that 2% of the subjects were not getting food, 3% of the samples were not have adequate clothing, 3% have very poor hygiene, 1 % has no shelter and 2% of them were not receiving any medical care.

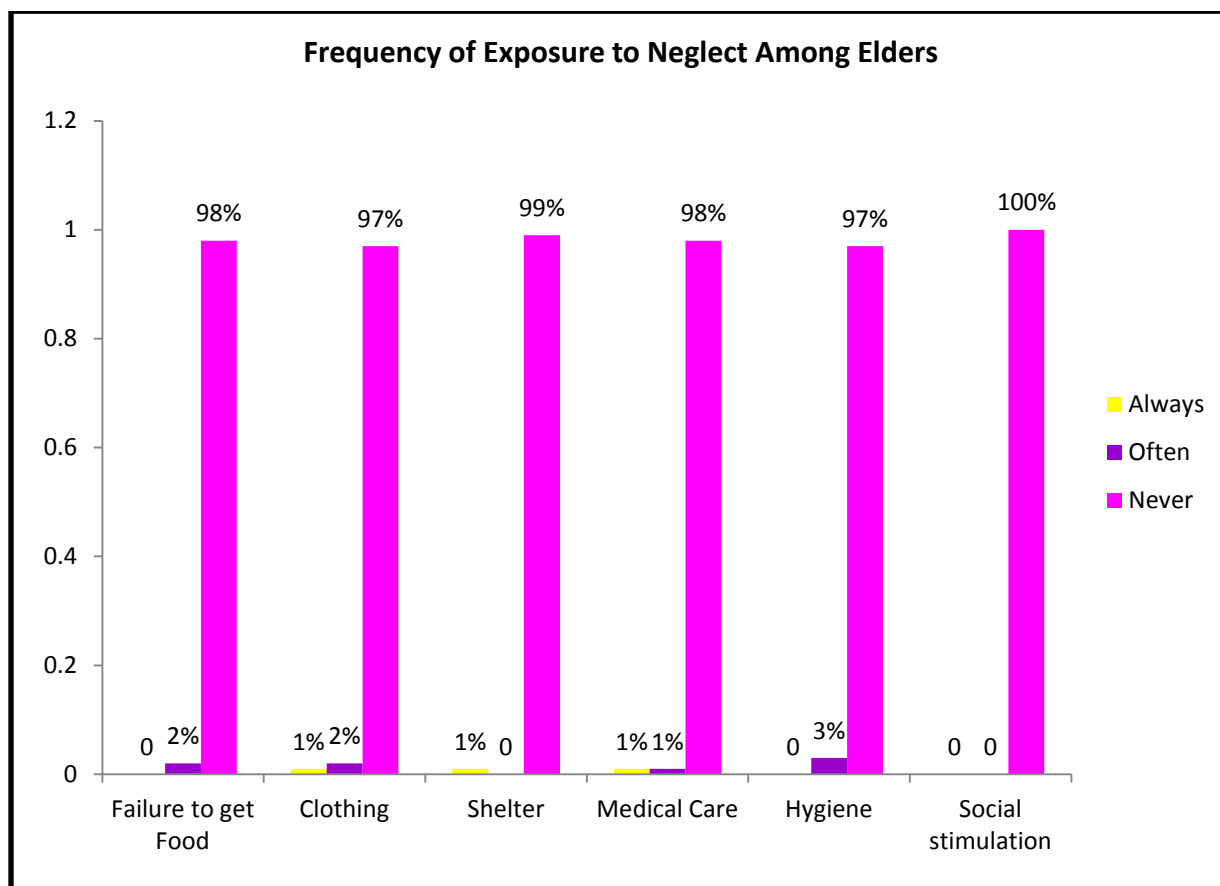


Figure13: Frequency of Exposure to Different Types of Neglect

Figure 13 depicts that, 2% of the subjects have no adequate clothes, 3% of the subjects were not maintaining any hygiene and 2% of the subjects were not often getting food.

TABLE 4 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND FACTORS AFFECTING ABUSES

Sl. No	Variables	χ^2	df	P Value
1.	Age	10.640	2	.005***
2.	Gender	9.000	1	.003***
3.	Religion	25.280	2	.000***
4.	Marital status	1.106	3	.000***
5.	Education	35.760	3	.000***
6.	Present - Occupation	1.219	4	.000***
7.	Source of Income	25.100	4	.000***
8.	Caregiver	47.480	5	.000***
9.	Staying	87.020	2	.000***
10.	Physical Problems	51.840	1	.000***
11.	Psycho-social Problems	11.560	1	.001***
12.	Experience on abuse	77.440	1	.000***
13.	Source of abuse	26.000	6	.000***
14.	Types of abuse	81.440	5	.000***
15.	Reason for abuse	26.240	7	.000***
16.	Response towards abuse	87.440	5	.000***
17.	Feelings on abuse	54.480	3	.000***
18.	Types of Physical Abuse	144.880	3	.000***

19.	Psychological Abuse	42.800	3	.000***
20.	Financial Abuse	239.520	3	.000***
21.	Sexual Abuse	165.680	2	.000***
22.	Neglect	3.769	5	.000***
23.	Frequency of abuse	64.240	3	.000***

*** Significant at the level of $P < .001$

Table 5 depicts that there will be a significant association between socio-demographic variables and factors affecting abuses such as source, types, reason, frequency, response and feelings on abuse ($P < .001$). So the research hypothesis was accepted.

IV. Results

Among 100 samples, 42% of the samples were between the age group of 71-80 years but 18% of them were above 81 years. 65% of the samples were females. More than half (56%) of the subjects were belongs to Hindu religion. 66% were married but 30% were widows. 26% of the samples were illiterate 14% have collegiate education. 18% of the subjects were Retired Govt. Employees. 62% of the samples have no job. 39% of the subjects were getting different types of pension, but 10% of them are still working. 19% have no income. 7% of the subjects were staying alone. 86% of the samples were suffering from physical problems and 33 % have psycho-social problems. 32% of the care givers are daughter - in laws. 24% of the caregivers are wives. 5% of the caregivers are husband. About Co-morbid diseases, 24% of the samples have diabetes, 7% have renal disease and 22% of them were having hypertension.

Regarding abuses, 94% of the samples were having bitter experience on abuse. 21% of the abuses were mainly done by the husbands. 14% and 26% of the abuses was done by the daughter- in laws and sons respectively. 53% of the subjects were frequently getting abuses, and 6% of the samples were the victims of daily abuse. 39% of the samples were reacting towards abuse by using abuse words, but 37% of them were keeping quite. 54% of the victims were looking very sad after the incident of abuse, but 28% of them were very angry and 9 % of the subjects were thinking about suicide.

Among 100 samples, 48 % of them were experiencing psychological abuses, 22 % of them were the victims of physical abuse and 6% of them were suffered from sexual abuse, 10% of them got neglect from their beloved ones and 8% of the subjects were suffering from financial abuse. This study also explored the reason for elder abuse, it shows that 16% were not doing any household activities, 24% of the subjects were having health problems and 18 % of the elders were not giving any money to the family, these are the main reason for elder abuse.

Regarding types of abuse, 22% of the samples were experiencing physical abuse, out of that 11% of the samples were suffered from slapping, 6% of the subjects were getting hitting and kicking respectively. 24% of the samples were experiencing verbal aggression, 12% suffered from different types of threat from their relatives. 11 % of them were the victims of maltreatment. 4% of the elders were suffered from misusing of assets, 2% of them were victims of theft and forcible transfer of property and money. 2% of the elders were suffered from forced sexual activity and 4% of them were experiencing touching. 2% of the subjects were not getting food, 3% of the samples have no adequate clothing, 3% have very poor hygiene, 1 % has no shelter and 2% of them were not receiving any medical care.

About frequency of exposure to abuses, 9% of the samples were exposed to slapping very often, 4% of the samples were always getting kicking and 5% of them were getting very often hitting. 11 % of the samples were getting threat and verbal aggression very often 13% of them were always suffered from verbal abuse. 2% of subjects were always suffering from misusing of assets and forcible transfer of money and often 2% of them were exposed to theft. 2% of the subjects were very often experiencing forced sexual activity and 4% of them were victims of touching. 2% of the subjects were not often getting food.

There will be a significant association between socio-demographic variables and factors affecting abuses such as source, types, reason, frequency, response and feelings on abuse. So the research hypothesis was accepted.

V. Discussion

The present study revealed that 94 % of the elder persons were suffering from one or other forms of abuses, and the incidence is more in village areas than cities. This finding was consistent with other study findings suggest that the prevalence of abuse was relatively higher among older elderly (80+) and those with low education and poor economic status.¹⁰

Present study findings shows that 72 % of the women were suffering from different types of abuses, these findings was supported with the findings of an estimated one out of every three women worldwide will be physically or sexually abused during her lifetime. In the present study 21% of the abuses were done by the

husbands, this finding is consistent with the study regarding the nature of violence committed by women against their intimate partners.⁹

In the present study 94% of the subjects were the victims of one or other forms of abuses but the overall prevalence rates of elder abuse were 2.6% .¹¹In India prevalence rate of abuse was 14%.⁸ Home health careworkers were surveyed to determine prevalence rate of abuse, it was 5.5%.¹²

The most common type of abuse was psychological abuse, followed by isolation, physical abuse, neglect, and material abuse¹³. When caregivers of elder patients in respite care were interviewed about physical and verbal abuse and neglect, 45% caregivers confessed to some type of abuse, with verbal abuse is the most frequent type¹⁴. In the present study all most all the findings were similar, i.e. 48 % of them were experiencing psychological abuses, 24% of the samples were experiencing verbal aggression, and 12% of the subjects were suffered from different types of threat from their relatives.

In the present study 11 % of the subjects were victims of maltreatment. 22 % were experienced physical abuse and 6% of them were suffered from sexual abuse. 53% of the subjects were frequently getting abuses. These findings were supported with the other study findings that shows that 11% of the elders experiencing at least one form of mistreatment - emotional, physical, sexual or potential neglect. Past-year prevalence was 5.1 % for emotional mistreatment, 1.6 % physical mistreatment, 0.6 % for sexual mistreatment and 5.1 percent for potential neglect. The risk of elder mistreatment is higher for individuals with the following characteristics: low household income, unemployed or retired, reporting poor health, having experienced a prior traumatic event or reporting low levels of social support.¹⁵

In the present study 94% of the elders were having one or other forms of abuses. Psychological abuses were the most common abuse among elderly. Physical abuse was in second position. This finding was consistent with another study shows that the prevalence rate was 14 % in India and China. 48 % of them were experiencing psychological abuses, 22 % of them were the victims of physical abuse and 6% of them were suffered from sexual abuse. The most common type of abuse was psychological abuse, followed by isolation, physical abuse, neglect, and material abuse.¹⁶

VI. Recommendations

Abuse is the major problem faced by the elders. Many elders around the world are being abused: harmed in some substantial way often by people who are directly responsible for their care. They may not see or hear as well or think as clearly as they used to, leaving openings for unscrupulous people to take advantage of them. Mental or physical ailments may make them more trying companions for the people who live with them. So as a Health Professionals initiate abuse prevention programs for protecting our elderly. Prevention of elder abuse will require a Comprehensive Approach involving a multifaceted intervention including multiple sectors of society.

Recommendations

1. Formulate **Multifaceted Team**, which includes Doctors, Nurses, Psychologists, Social workers, Lawyers, Policemen, Legislators, Magistrates, Community Leaders and Mass Media Officers.
2. Formulate proper reporting system for abuse among elderly- If, you are witnessing any elder abuse you can immediately report to the police.
3. Identification of the cases of abuses- Early identification and notification of case to the Police Department, Hospital, and Social Welfare Department
4. Formulate policies for strengthen laws on “Elder Protection,” so that it will help to investigate and initiate legal prosecution as early as possible.
5. Ensure justice to the elders by Judiciary Department
6. Formulate “**Abuse Cell**” in the hospital. Which include Physician, Psychologist, Nurses, and Social worker. Psychologist will be in-charge of the Abuse Cell. Each and every abuse cases will be reported to this cell. The team will discuss and initiate treatment for the victims. Arrange counseling sessions for the victim and their family. Ensure periodical follow ups. Maintain reports and records of the abuse cell.
7. Organize awareness program for the public and family regarding “**Rights of Older People**” and also conduct class on identification and prevention of abuse.
8. Encourage the Police department to initiate attention for Older Peoples Rights and their Protection. Involve Peoples Police to ensure safety and security of the elders.
9. Modify the School Curriculum, and includes Moral Education Class on Values of Older People. Educate the children regarding importance of respecting the elder persons.
10. As a responsible citizen, you can help us in abuse prevention i.e., Please find out who is doing abuse? Where the abuse is taking place? Why the people are doing abuse? What type of abuse? How often they are getting abuse? So every one can act to protect our elder people.

11. In order to eradicate abuse among elderly, there is a need to create positive image of elderly through active involvement of political leaders, NGOs, public, community events and bringing generations together. If youngsters are at a risk of dying, the older are at a risk of living. So this aging population will require more care and protection than is currently available or possible.

VII. Conclusion

More people are living longer than ever before. So the elder people were exposed to different types of abuses. Elder abuse is intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder. Through this study the researcher identified the socio-demographic data of the elderly. This shows that 42% of the subjects were between the age group of 71-80 years; females were exposed to more abuse than males. The investigator explored that health problem is the major reason for abuses. The researcher analyzed that 6% of the subjects were exposed to daily abuse. There was a significant association between socio-demographic variables and factors affecting abuses ($P < .001$). So the researchable hypothesis was accepted. Main recommendations of this study was to formulate Multifaceted Team, which includes Doctors, Nurses, Psychologists, Social workers, Lawyers, Policemen, Legislators, Magistrates, Community Leaders and Mass Media Officers. Formulate "Abuse Cell" in the hospital. Which include Physician, Psychologist, Nurses, and Social worker. Psychologist will be in-charge of the Abuse Cell. Each and every abuse case will be reported to this cell. The team will discuss and initiate treatment for the victims. Arrange counseling sessions for the victim and their family. In order to eradicate abuse among the elderly, there is a need to create positive image of elderly through active involvement of political leaders, family members public, NGOs, community events and bringing generations together. The older people are at a risk of living, so this aging population will require more care, love, affection and protection from their beloved ones. There fore we can "Add life to years and not just days to life".

Acknowledgement

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