

Geriatrics, Covid-19 Pandemic and Challenges

Dear Readers,

Rise in life expectancy and decrease in mortality has resulted in an extremely faster rate of geriatrics in India. The majority of the elderly population in India is underprivileged with low education and lesser cleanliness. These geriatrics because of age, suffer from several diseases like diabetes, hypertension, stroke, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, dementia, and other neurodegenerative conditions. Apart from these, they do have compromised immunity which makes them vulnerable to a number of infections. The aged people are the most susceptible individuals to Covid-19 infections throughout the world and also in India. The National Bureau of Economic Research, USA indicated that the severity of infection and casualty is highest in the geriatric population. Research showed that 53% of people more than 60 years of age died in India due to the Covid-19 pandemic compared to younger individuals where death was only 10%.

The quick pace at which the inflammatory activities initiated in Covid-19 infection results in a “cytokine storm” which activates inflammation in all major organs like lungs, heart, liver, kidney, brain, and vascular system. Stimulated inflammatory pathway results in vascular injuries, clotting, bleeding, and hypoxia, finally leads to multi-organ damage. The scenario is still worst in co-morbid conditions like hypertension, diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, heart issues, and respiratory ailments. The health care system in India for geriatric patients is still in an infancy state. In several ways, the life of the elderly people is detached from the main

health care system, transportation especially in rural parts of India, home-support scheme, emergency support, and social connectivity. Hence, it is necessary to have inclusive and holistic care approach towards geriatric individuals to face the challenges in near future.

Even though aged people experienced extreme adverse effects of Covid-19 on their overall health with high mortality, the trend towards mental health is different. Surprisingly, the geriatric population reported notably reduced anxiety, depression, and trauma or stress- associated conditions including substance use and suicide tendency than younger people. A positive result on mental health in aged subjects may be due to their higher resilience towards stressful events during their lifetime, cognitive capacity, and importance of meaningful relationships in socially isolated conditions. An added advantage in old age people is wisdom, which encompasses understanding and concern, control over their emotions, determination in accepting the truth of life, and spirituality.

Covid-19 pandemic changed geriatric people’s lifestyle drastically, the care and support they get, and their social connectivity through technology and the way they are perceived the situation. Aged people faced many challenges like staying more time at home, lack of physical communication with family members, friends, and a brief stoppage of other activities. Therefore, it is necessary for all of us to build opportunities to promote healthy aging during critical conditions like pandemics.

DOI: 10.5530/ijopp.14.2.15

Address for
correspondence:

Dr. Bhagya Venkanna Rao,

Editor-in-chief, ijopp.

Email Id: ijopp@emanuscript.in



www.ijopp.org