

Functional Disability Status among the Elderly Persons and Its Predictors in Kerala and Maharashtra: An Analysis of BKPAI, 2011 Data

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This paper examines the magnitude of functional disability among the elderly persons and its predictors in Kerala and Maharashtra. It is measured with Lawton and Brody's Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Scale by assigning scores to elderly persons' ability to do or not eight day-to-day activities by adopting correlation and multiple linear regression techniques. In both the states the magnitude of functional disability status of the elderly has shown an increasing trend with an increase in their current age, whereas such pattern has decreased with an increase in their years of schooling. Further, while the likelihood of functional disability among the elderly noted to be much lower among those who are working for wages and self-reported health status as fair / good, such likelihood is observed to be higher among those who are co-residing with children / others than their respective counterparts ($p < 0.001$ for all cases). Place of residence, gender, marital status, wealth index of households, number of chronic morbidities and physical disability index have also exhibited their independent net effects on the functional disability of the elderly, but differentially across the states.

I Introduction

The size of the elderly population (60 years and above) is increasing rapidly in many countries of the world as well as in India. Such ageing process has several social, economic and epidemiological implications. Among these, functional disability among the elderly persons is a major one. It occurs mainly because older persons are likely to live longer due to better nutrition and health facilities. But at the same time increased longevity possibly deteriorates their health due to biological age, gender effects, lifestyle habits, chronic morbidity and other related factors. These, in turn, make the elderly suffer more with the risk of disability, especially disability in functioning in day-to-day activities. In the Indian context, understanding such functional disability among the elderly is important because of the demand for providing health care and social services to older persons in the future. Besides, these persons are relatively greater users of (primary) health care as they are free of cost than the one received from private health care providers.

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