

## Socio-demographic characteristics of the elderly males (60-80 years) affects their health and nutritional status

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■ **ABSTRACT** : A number of hundred subjects were studied through multistage random sampling, taking fifty subjects each from the two decades *i.e.* 60-70 years and 70-80 years. Nutritional Assessment was done by anthropometry, clinical investigation and dietary survey and their health was assessed using General, Physical, Mental and Social Health Measures, Multiple Chronic conditions and Nutritional Risk. Majority of the elderly males found to reside in joint family and few of them had nuclear and extended families but no subject was seen to reside alone. Maximum per cent of the subjects were Hindus and vegetarians, and belonged to Upper Socio- Economic Class, Class I and Upper Middle Class II. The mean BMI was  $23.8 \text{ kg/m}^2 \pm 5.0$  of the elderly males in 60-70 years of age and mean BMI was  $22.8 \text{ kg/m}^2 \pm 3.8$  in the age of 70-80 years. Clinical signs indicated the deficiency of vitamin C, iron and protein inspite of taking vitamins and minerals supplements. The overall consumption of cereals, pulses, roots and tubers, fruits and milk were significantly lower than the RDA, recommended by ICMR, whereas, the consumption of sugar and fat were more. The nutrient intake when estimated and compared with RDA showed that the intake of energy was more than required by the age, while protein, vitamin A, iron and zinc and fibre were lower in both the groups. The results of Socio-Demographic and health variables showed that though some of the subjects complained of poor vision, pain in back and legs and impaired hearing, they were capable of performing the activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL). The distress index showed that they were mentally healthy and were not depressed as they all reported to be having good social support. The scores obtained by the subjects in Nutritional Screening Initiative Checklist reported that among the subjects of 60-70 years, 32 per cent were healthy, 42 per cent were mildly at the risk, 16 per cent were at moderate risk, while 10 per cent were severely at the nutritional and health risk. On the other hand, 24 per cent were healthy, 4 per cent were mildly at risk, 16 per cent were at moderate risk and another 16 per cent were severely at the seriousness of nutritional and health risk among the aged of 70-80 years as the data indicated that 26 per cent and 38 per cent of the subjects each decade, suffered from multiple chronic diseases. It was concluded that the elderly males aged 60-80 years, residing in Ajmer City, were at good social and mental health status, but were at the health risk due to their improper eating behaviour and unhealthy food habits.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Ageing, Old age, Elderly, Socio-demographic, IADL, ADL

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**A**geing is a developmental process, beginning at conception and ending with death. It can be defined as the biological changes that occur in the post-reproductive period. Ageing is an intrinsic characteristic that is fundamental in every individual and is accompanied by gradual slowing down of biological system, loss of vigor, and inability to withstand stress (Sehgal and Raghuvanshi, 2007).

Old age offers a gorgeous spectrum of physical signs and clinical pictures, under the domain of geriatric medicine. Although physical growth is completed by early adulthood, the body tissues and the cells remain in the dynamic state with catabolism slightly exceeding anabolism resulting in the net decrease in the number of cells (Joshi, 2002).

Ageing is not programmed nor is it inevitable. Life span