

Gender differences the problems of spouse absence in elderly people

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The present study was conducted to assess the problem of spouse absence according to across gender in elderly people and specific domain in problem was family problem, social problem, recreational problem, health problem and financial problem of spouse absence in elderly. The study based upon sample of 100 elderly in spouse absent (50 male and 50 female) respondents of age range 60 year up to 80 years, the developed an interview schedule on problem of spouse absence in elderly. Results revealed that majority of elderly had now over all problems faced by both male and female. It is evident from the non-significant differences of problem for male and female elderly respondents.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Problems, Spouse absence, Elderly, Gender, Age

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Aging is normal, biological and universal phenomenon. Aging of the population is occurring throughout the world, more rapidly in developing countries. United Nations considered 60 years to be dividing the line between, old age and middle and younger age group threshold of old age (Meisheri *et al.*, 1998). Elderly consists of age warring or surpassing the over age life span of human being and of the human and terms of the old people includes seniors elderly and later life elderly or again can be defined as a process becoming older. It is the process of systems deterioration with time. Successfully again strive with maintaining a balance on the social, cognitive cultural and economic effects of again, in human society, again is perceived to begin at the age of 65 years which often reflects the biological changes that occur in human being as well as cultural and societal convention. The process of becoming old represents complex interaction among health behaviour, hereditary and psycho-social and environmental factors. It is associated with all the regular changes that occur in biologically mature individual as they advance in chronological age (Harris, 2007). Elderly people face adjustment problems in these areas that are unique in many ways (Pivot and Dennier, 1993). For example, not only must they adjust to working conditions but they must also adjust to working conditions. But they must also adjust to realization that their usefulness to their employers is lessened

as they grow older and that, as a result, their status in the work group decreases. furthermore, they have the problem of adjusting to retirements which, for most elderly people, comes soon after old age, sets in the family older men and women must adjust to depending on each other for companionship; do the lack of contact with, and influence over, their children; and often to the loss of a spouse, unmarried elderly people often face adjustment problems that are more serious than the ones confronting those who are married or who have lost of a spouse (Bennet *et al.*, 2005). Loss of the spouse is the challenging and life changing events, this is even worse in elderly people, whether the spouse dies expectedly or un-expectedly, loneliness among the elderly widows whose social network has already been reduced affects the elderly widows quality of life and they become more vulnerable to loneliness.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was planned on the problems of spouse absence in elderly according to gender differences and carried out an over a period of 10 months from July to May in the community by purposively sample selection by old age home and house to house visit area of Rajeev nagar, Kapoorthala, South city, Adil nagar in Lucknow. The study subject included elderly men and women aged 60 year to +80

year. A total of 100 samples were interviewed. The interview schedule was developed by reviewing related Indian studies. This interview schedule was pilot tested after the preparation of interview schedule on problem of spouse absence in elderly; a pilot study was under taken with the 15 non-sampled respondents in the same locality to see the reliability and validity of questions. According to the experience and type of response, the interview schedule was moderate especially in the section of final data collection. The prior permission was taken from the head of the old respondent and for conducting the study good support was established with the respondent and then was explained the aim and objective of the study. An interview schedule to elicit the information of the respondent self-administered schedule was given. Once each to respondents, was requested to fill the proforma with full assurance about his confidentially and anonymity of his information. The respondents were assured that the data would be used only for scientific purpose of the study.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from the present study have been discussed under the following sub-heads:

General information regarding the respondents :

It was found from Table 1 that out of total 50 males and 50 females, 36 per cent men and 64 per cent women were under

60-69 years of age, 44 per cent men and 20 per cent women were under 70-79 years of age and 20 per cent men and 16 per cent women were under 80 years of age group.

Table 2 shows that 6 per cent men and 12 per cent women were under employees in occupation, 6 per cent men and 74 per cent women were under the unemployed category of occupation and 88 per cent men and 14 per cent women were retired from occupation.

Table 3 indicates that 4 per cent male and 20 per cent female were illiterate, 68 per cent male and 64 per cent female were literate and 18 per cent male and 16 per cent female were above graduate or up to post graduate.

Problem's regarding gender differences:

Table 4 shows the level of problems on the basis of gender differences. The highly significant differences of family problem were in male and female elderly in spouse absent. Then non-significant differences between social problems were in male and female respondents. Non-significant differences were observed between recreational problem in male and female elderly widow. The non-significant differences between financial problems were in male. Health problem differences were non-significant in male and female respondents. Revicki and Mitchell (1990) and Lee *et al.* (2001) have also made some observations on the related aspects of the present investigations.

Table 1 : Distribution of respondent according to their age

Age	Male	Female	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	
60-69	18(36)	32(64)	50
70-79	22(44)	10(20)	32
>80	10(20)	8(16)	18
	50	50	100GT

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents according to their occupation

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	
Employee	3(6)	6(12)	9
Unemployed	3(6)	37(74)	40
Retired	44(88)	7(14)	51
	50	50	100GT

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentages

Table 3 : Distribution of respondents according to their education

Literacy status	Male	Female	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	
Illiterate	7 (14)	10 (20)	17
Literate	34(68)	32(64)	66
>graduate	9(18)	8(16)	17
	50	50	100 GT

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 4 : Distribution of respondent according to gender difference in level of problem

Level of problem	Male		Female		t value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Family problem	5.56	1.845	4.7	2.218	6.142
Social problem	5.56	2.093	5.72	1.789	0.163
Recreational problem	3.36	1.171	3.7	1.204	0.058
Financial problem	3.22	1.418	4.98	1.224	0.020
Health problem	5.28	1.980	5.66	2.016	0.019

Conclusion:

Non-significant differences were found among the male and female elderly people according to the gender differences in spouse absence.

The present study was restricted only to the old people in spouse absence. It is suggested that a study may be conducted on the general problems in old age since very few people have worked for senior citizens. The old people whose spouses are not alive, their families should be educated to adapt a special behaviour with their seniors, as he/she is now alone and feels deeper alone and feels deprived in their world. The family members should be educated through booklets and other mass media to have more close relationship with their senior whose spouse is no longer alive and to suggest to minimize the sudden and isolation of the concerned. Older person should have an access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational activities.

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