

MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES IN ELDERLY POPULATION OF ARAR CITY, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Old age is not a disease in itself, but the elderly people are vulnerable to long term diseases of insidious onset. Thus, estimates of health problems of the elderly are required to predict trends in disease burden, and plan health care strategies for intervention and treatment. **Aim of the study:** The aim of this community based study is to estimate the prevalence of different self-reported musculoskeletal problems and its determinants among the elderly population of Arar city, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. **Subjects and methods:** This cross sectional study was conducted in Arar city, the capital of the Northern Borders Governorate, KSA. Data was collected by a trained group of medical students with supervisors, from 5 randomly selected primary community healthcare centers in Arar city. Participants were selected using a systemic random sampling procedure. Data was collected through personal interviews with the sampled elderly and filling the questionnaire, which guided us to the data, including age, sex, educational status and marital status and different musculoskeletal problems along with examining their doctors' and hospital records and prescribed drugs. **Results:** characteristics of the sample showed that the mean age (\pm SD) was 70 (\pm 9.25) years, male to female ratio was 47.8 to 52.2, about half (45.7%) were obese. The overall prevalence of musculoskeletal diseases was 72.5%, the most common disease was myalgia and polyarthralgia which constituted 28.3%, then osteoarthritis of the knee in 22.5%, and osteoporosis which affected 21.7% of the studied elderly population. Musculoskeletal diseases were more common among females than males specially osteoporosis (30.6% Vs 12.1%) with statistically significant difference ($P < 0.05$), but no significant effect of age or BMI on the distribution of musculoskeletal diseases among the studied population ($P > 0.05$). **Conclusion:** In conclusion, musculoskeletal diseases are common health problems in the elderly population in Arar City, KSA. Musculoskeletal diseases are significantly higher in elderly females. Health education and preventive programs are highly recommended to protect and treat those vulnerable groups.

Keywords: Musculoskeletal diseases; Elderly population; Arar city; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.