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Prevalence of chronic pain and its characteristics among elderly people in Ahvaz city: A cross sectional study

Manouchehr Shirazi[1], Houman Manoochehri[2], Violet Alipour[3] and **Saeid Saeidimehr[4]**
[1]Azad University, Iran
[2]Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Iran
[3]Azad University, Iran
[4]Ahwaz Oil Hospital, Iran

Statement of the Problem: One of the major health problems in old age is chronic pain. There are some evidences showing that elderly chronic pain is not assessed and relieved adequately. Hence, it is essential to access accurate and sufficient information about chronic pain status to effectively manage the situation. The purpose of this study is assessing chronic pain prevalence and its characteristics among elderly.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A cross sectional study conducted among 205 elderly patients with chronic pain using multistage cluster sampling method. Data were collected during a period of 6 months in Ahwaz health care centers. Short version of the McGill Pain Questionnaire was used for chronic pain measurement evaluations. The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach alpha. Data were analyzed using SPSS software (version 21) via Independent sample T test.

Findings: This study showed that the most prevalent chronic pain was knee pain (80%) while; the least one was abdominal pain (13%). Majority of our participants (85%) reported having pain in multiple locations and 15% suffering from pain in a single location. Regarding type of pain, we found that cramping pain (80%) was the most prevalent type and sickening pain (22%) was the least prevalent. In addition, the most intense pain was discomforting pain (33%) and the least one was intolerable pain (19%). Pain was significantly ($P < 0.05$) higher in women, older than 65 years old, singles and under diploma education. There was no significant ($P > 0.05$) association between pain and home ownership as well as income.

Conclusion & Significance: This study revealed that prevalence of chronic pain is high among old people. Attention to chronic pain features among elderly is essential for identifying vulnerable groups and delivering better treatments. The findings of this study can be used by researchers and policy makers to plan effective pain management interventions.

shirazimanouchehr57@gmail.com