

Socio-Demographic Correlates of Pattern of Elderly Abuse in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined socio-demographic correlates of pattern of elderly abuse in Ado-Ekiti. Towards achieving this aim, information was gathered from elderly aged 60 years and above currently living in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 220 eligible respondents with the aid of EA maps. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was divided into two sections. The result shows that abandonment and neglect is the most common type of elderly abuse experienced by elders in the study area. Also, it was revealed that age has a positive relationship with the form of abuse that is the older in age, the more the level of abuse. While living with spouse and health status have negative and positive relationship on forms of abuse experienced respectively, there exist a strong and positive association between forms of abuse and some other demographic-characteristics of respondents. This study therefore recommends that better social support programs should be organized for the elderly who are facing neglect, abandonment and any other forms of abuse.

Keyword: elder abuse, correlate, abandonment, social support, neglect

Introduction

Elder abuse in domestic settings constitutes a major social problem, affecting hundreds of thousands of elderly people across the globe. The problem is largely hidden under the shroud of family secrecy. The signs of elder abuse are not recognized, leading to gross under reporting of the problem.

According to National Centre for Elderly Abuse (2000), the true national incidence of prevalence of elder abuse is not known although various studies have attempted to estimate the size of the problem. In 1991, for example, researchers estimated that 2.5 million people were victims of various forms of elder abuse. This figure was adjusted in 1996, based on state reporting data, to suggest that there were between 820,000 and 1860000 abused elders in United States.

Elder abuse is the most common form of elder maltreatment in domestic settings according to the neglect reports that were substantiated in 1996, 55 percent involved neglect. Physical abuse accounted for 14.6 percent in the same year, while financial or martial exploitation represented 12.3 present of the substantial reports. In 1996, 66.4 percent of the victims of domestic elder abuse were white, while 18.7 percent were black. Hispanic elders accounted for 10 percent of the domestic elder abuse (National Centre for Elderly Abuse, 2000).

According to World Health Organization (2005), elder abuse has been defined as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another person. Elder abuse can take many forms in physical, psychological and sexual abuse, financial exploitation, neglect and medication abuse, abandonment and marginalization of older people in institutions or social and economic policies. With the global population of older people (age 60 and above) predicted to triple from 672 million in 2005 to almost 1.9 million in 2050, concerns around elder abuse are increasing which required urgent attention and solution.

Nigeria being a developing nation about 5.2% of her population was elderly according to National Population Census report, and elder abuse is a very serious social problem among people living in both rural and urban areas of country. Many researches have been carried out on issues relating to elderly in the country but issues on elder abuse have been limited to an extent in literatures relating to socio-demographic correlates of elder abuse in South-West, Nigeria.

This study intend to explore socio-demographic correlates of elder abuse in relation to southwest Nigeria so as to as have a valid numeric information relating to patterns of elder abuse in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Many researchers have researched on elder abuse issues in advanced nations where there exist different forms of social supports for the aged but Nigeria, a nation in which about 5.2% of her population are elderly, researches are limited in relation to pattern of elderly abuse in the country. It is known that the rate of elder abuse is highly increasing among elders of the country which is witnessed basically in many rural and urban centres of the country ranging from the neglect, financial exploitation and physical abuse.

This paper intends to study socio-demographic correlates of elder abuse in Southwest Nigeria, so as to know the factors contributing to increase in elder abuse which is a major social problem among the aged in the country.

Objectives of the study

General objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the socio-demographic correlates of elder abuse in Ado-Ekiti Town, South West Nigeria.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to

- (a) Investigate the prevalence of each form of abuse of elderly in Ado-Ekiti
- (b) Examine the factors influencing each form of abuse of elderly in the town.
- (c) Assess the influence of health status of elderly on the form of abuse experienced in the town.
- (d) Investigate the effect of current age of elderly on the form of abuse experienced in the town.
- (e) Know the influence of spouse presence and the form of elderly abuse faced by ageing in the study area.

Justification of the study

This study intend to bring more information relating to causes and effects of indices of elderly abuse which has not been well researched in Southwest Nigeria, also to add to existing knowledge and literatures in the field of “Demography of Ageing” and finally to provide basic quantitative information for the provision of better social security and health facilities by policy makers for the betterment of elders in the study area and the world at large.

Hypotheses of the study

- There exist no significant relationship between current age of an elder and the form of elder abuse experienced.
- There exist no significance between health status of elder and the form of elder abuse experienced.
- There exist no significant relationship between presence of an elder’s spouse and the form of elder abuse experienced.

Methodology

The Study Area

Ado Ekiti is the capital city of Ekiti State and the most urban and populous community in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It lies in the savannah and rainforest zones of the country within longitudes 40°0 E and 50°10N and has an estimated population of 149, 472 (based on the 1991 National Population Census figure) and a land area of 210 km². It is the head-quarters of Ado – Ekiti Local Government Area (L.G.A.) with 193 Enumeration Areas (EAs) (158 EAs in the urban area and 35 EAs in the rural area). The inhabitants of Ado-Ekiti are mainly farmers, traders and artisans. The presence of aged in the town make the researcher chooses the area as a case study.

Research Design and Method of data collection

The selection of respondents for this survey was based on EA map that was collected from National Population Commission Office in Ado-Ekiti from which number of streets were selected. Of these houses on the streets, a simple random sampling was used to select the households used for the survey.

Sample Size Determinant

For the purpose of this study and better sample size, a formula was used to determine the sample size used for this study since the target population is above 10000. At 95% confidence interval, the sample size was derived using the formula:

$$N = \frac{P(1-P)(Z_{\alpha}^2)/d^2}{q}$$

N-Sample size

P- Prevalence rate

Z- Normal distribution

d- Degree of Accuracy

P= 0.5

q= 0.5

$Z_{\alpha}^2=1.96^2$

$N= [0.5(1-0.5) (1.96^2)/0.05^2]$

$\{0.5(0.5) (3.8416)/0.0025\}$

N=216.82

The figure was approximated to 220 for the purpose of effective coverage.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was structurally designed and worded in a simple and straightforward manner. To collect concise and adequate information necessary for this study, open as well as close ended questions were asked.

To simplify the procedure of administration, the questionnaire was classified into sections. Section A of the questionnaire contained Socio-economic information while Section B contained information relating to daily activities of elderly and information on abuse.

Data Analysis

The information provided by the respondents in the questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS package. Firstly, the data was analyzed by percentage distribution. Cross tabulation was used to make comparison between two different variables-dependent and Independent. The hypotheses of interest were tested using the chi-square test and regression analysis.

Data Presentation

This chapter presents the analysis of data. Both univariate and bivariate analysis were employed. The analysis covered both the independent and the outcome variables (forms of abuse). Table1 presents the percentage distributions of socio-economic characteristics of sampled respondents like age, level of education, sex, religion, marital status etc. A total of 220 sampled respondents were interviewed in the course of this study. Of the total number of respondents interviewed, a little above half (51.8 percent) were male while 48.2 percent were female. Age is a major demographic characteristic that can not be over-emphasized. Almost seven out of ten respondents were aged 60-69 years and about one-quarter of the sampled respondents were aged 70-79 years with a median age 67. As regards educational attainment of respondents, at least three in every ten elderly had completed primary school education and about 40 percent had minimum of secondary education. There is a fair balance across religion as about 51 percent were Christians compare to 45 percent who were Muslims. Five in every ten were currently married and approximately one-quarter of the elderly were widowed. A little above two-fifth was currently working. Five of ten were currently living spouse.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Background Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (N=220)	Percentage
Sex		
Male	114	51.8
Female	106	48.2
Age		
60-69 years	150	68.2
70-79 years	54	24.5
80 years above	16	7.3
<i>Median age = 67</i>		
Educational level		
None	61	27.7
Primary	69	31.4
Secondary	17	7.7
Post-secondary	73	33.2
Religion		
Christianity	114	51.8
Islam	99	45.0
Traditional religion	7	3.2
Marital status		
Married	118	53.7
Divorced	30	13.6
Separated	18	8.2
Widowed	54	24.5
Currently working		
Yes	105	47.7
No	115	52.3
Currently working with spouse		
Yes	113	51.4
No	107	48.6

Survey, 2010

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by the awareness of elderly abuse and other variables related to respondents' health status. More than 90% (94 percent) have heard of elderly abuse in the study area and three of every ten elderly currently said physical abuse was the common abuse among the elderly, a little below one-quarter said abandonment also common in the area. About nine in every ten respondents had experienced one or two form(s) of elderly abuse in the study area. Health status is another important issue among the aged. Majority of the respondents do go for medical check-up in both public and private hospitals in the study area and three-quarter of the respondents said their current health condition was good and approximately three in ten said health was on average. Majority (61.4 percent) of the respondents said they were always satisfied seeing people around them while a little below one-tenth (8.2 percent) were not satisfied and approximately 30 percent were indifferent.

Different suggestions and advice were given by respondents on how to reduce rate of elderly abuse in the study area. A little proportion above two-fifth (42.7 percent) of the respondents could not give advice on the issue under study. 10 percent of the respondents said better social support for elderly from government will reduce elderly abuse in the study area and elders should not in any way be neglected or abandoned. 10.9 percent of the respondents suggested that proper training of children by parent when they are young will reduce the tendency of abuse when they are old, approximately one-fifth percent suggested that taking good care of parents by children and relatives will reduce any form of elderly abuse, 2.7 percent and less than five percent of the total respondents said encouragement of the elderly and respect for elders will reduce elderly abuse respectively.

Table 2: Awareness of Elderly Abuse and Respondents Experience

Responses	Frequency (N=220)	Percentage
Awareness of elderly abuse		
Yes	206	93.6
No	14	6.4
Abuse common among elderly		
Physical abuse	71	32.2
Emotional abuse	45	20.5
Sexual abuse	10	4.5
Abandonment	54	24.5
Financial abuse	40	18.2
Currently experience abuse		
Yes	181	85.4
No	31	14.6
How often the respondents experienced abuse		
Once-in-3 months	113	52.6
Once-in 2 months	57	26.5
Once-in a month	21	9.8
Weekly	9	4.2
Daily	15	7.0
Current health status		
Good	162	75.3
Average	53	24.7
How do you feel when people are around		
Satisfactory	135	61.4
Unsatisfactory	18	8.2
Indifferent	67	30.5
Advice on ways to curb elderly abuse		
None	94	42.7
Better social support	22	10.0
Proper training of children	24	10.9
Elder should not be neglected	22	10.0
Encouragement of elderly	6	2.7
Good care of parent	43	19.5
Respect for elder	9	4.1

Survey, 2010

Table 3 below represents the outcome variable of the study, approximately two-fifth (42.8%) of the respondents did not experience any form of elderly abuse presently and in the past, while approximately 2 out of every five elderly experienced financial exploitation. While three of every five respondents (60.9%) faced abandonment and neglect as a form of abuse experienced. A little less than two-fifth of respondents (37.2%) experienced physical abuse currently and in the past while 32.1 percent of the respondents faced emotional/sexual abuse. Neglect/abandonment is a common form of elderly abuse among the elderly in the study area.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Abuse Experienced

Form abuse experienced	Frequency (N=220)	Percentage
None	92	42.8
Physical abuse	80	37.2
Emotional/sexual abuse	69	32.1
Abandonment/neglect	131	60.9
Financial exploitation	90	41.9

Survey, 2010

Table 4 presents the bivariate analysis of forms elderly abuse (emotional abuse and abandonment) and socio-economic characteristics. Out of the respondents who experienced emotional abuse, one-quarter of them were males and approximately 40 percent were females. And of those who experienced abandonment, more than three-quarters were males while less than half (40.6%) were females. According to the age distribution, approximately one-fifth of respondents who were within aged group 60-69 years experienced emotional abuse while the majority (60.0%) in the same age category experienced abandonment. Of those who had low education five of every ten experienced emotional abuse while of the same category very close to three-quarter experienced neglect. And of those who have high education, three-fifth currently experienced emotional abuse while one-third of the respondents who had minimum of secondary education experienced neglect/abandonment.

By religious affiliation, of those who were Christians among the respondents more than 20 percent experienced emotional abuse while very close to 80 percent of the respondents experienced abandonment. While two of five respondents that were Muslims experienced emotional abuse while the same proportion also experienced neglect. Most of the married respondents experienced neglect/abandonment and emotional abuse while about 70% of those that were aware of elderly abuse in the study area experienced no emotional abuse while three-fifth of the respondents also experienced abandonment. Of those who have good health status, one of five currently experienced emotional abuse while close to three-quarter of the same set of people experienced abandonment. Of those who currently living their spouse among the respondents, less than half experienced emotional abuse while approximately the same proportion experienced abandonment.

Based on the hypotheses of the research, there exist a significant relationship between awareness and the forms of abuse experienced by respondents. Also there exists a significant relationship between current health status of elderly and of form of abuse experienced while current age of respondents has no impact on the forms of abuse experienced by the elderly and living with spouse has no impact on the forms of abuse experienced.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Form of Elderly Abuse and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Variables	Emotional abuse				Abandonment/neglect			
	Yes (N=69)	No(N=146)	X ² = value	P- value	Yes (N=131)	No (N=84)	X ² = value	P- value
Sex								
Male	24.6	75.4	6.316	0.012	78.9	21.1	33.092	0.000
Female	40.6	59.4			40.6	59.4		
Age								
60-69 years	18.7	81.3	41.462	0.000**	60.0	40.0	2.134	0.344
70-79 years	64.8	35.2			59.3	40.7		
80+	54.5	645.5			81.8	18.2		
Educational level								
≤ Primary	45.9	54.1	70.796	0.000	71.0	29.0	75.933	0.000
≥ Secondary	60.3	39.7			30.2	69.8		
Religion								
Christianity	24.6	75.4	7.859	0.020	78.9	21.1	34.504	0.000
Islam	41.4	58.6			41.4	58.6		
Others	0.00	100.00			0.00	100.0		
Marital status								
Married	23.7	76.3	44.340	0.015	76.3	23.7	66.383	0.000
Others	59.2	40.8			46.6	53.4		
Awareness of elderly abuse								
Yes	30.6	69.4	5.152	0.023**	60.2	39.8	1.120	0.290
No	66.7	33.3			77.8	22.2		
Health status								
Good	22.2	62.3	29.380	0.000**	63.0	37.0	1.141	0.286
Average	77.8	37.7			54.7	45.3		
Currently living with spouse								
Yes	38.0	62.0	3.431	0.064**	38.0	62.0	.087	0.000
No	26.2	73.8			84.1	15.9		

Survey, 2010

** P-value of tested hypotheses significant at $p < 0.05$.

Discussions

During the course of this research a total of 220 respondents were interviewed who were 60 years and above. Out of the total respondents for the study, approximately 52 percent were male while 48 percent were female. Those who were aged 60 – 69 years has the highest percentage and close to one – quarter of the respondents were age 70 – 79 years and the remaining percent were aged 80 years and above with median age of 67 years.

It was discovered that there exist no significant relationship between current age of elderly and the forms abuse they experienced. Secondly, presence of spouse in the house has no influence on the kind of abuse elder experience tends to experience less abuse when they have people among them especially their spouse. Also, socio-demographic features of respondents have influence on the form of abuse experienced by the elderly. Health status of elderly has a significant influence on the form of abuse the elderly experienced. The better the health status the lower the abuse experienced and vice-versa.

Lastly, the effect of age, currently living with spouse and health status on the form of abuse experienced by the elderly showed that age has positive relationship with form abuse that is the more the age, the more the level of abuse. While living with spouse and health status have negative and positive relationships on forms of abuse been experienced respectively. There exist a strong and positive association between forms of abuse and some characteristics of respondents.

Recommendation

The following recommendations will be useful to government, policy makers, and non-governmental organizations that are responsible in catering for the elderly and giving the support needed to the aged:

- a. To eradicate or reduce elderly abuse in the study area, there should a better social support system for the elderly who are facing neglect and abandonment and any other form of abuse. Social support can be in form of stipend, elderly home, provision of free and better health facilities.
- b. Parent and guardian should take good and proper care of their children while they are still in active service because a well trained child will take good care of his/her parents when they are old.
- c. Children should respect the elders since most emotional and physical abuse experienced by respondents during the course of this study was as a result of assault and verbal abuse from people living around especially close family members.

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