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‘AGAINST ALL ODDS’- COVID 19 AND ITS IMPACT ON ELDERLY

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Abstract

COVID-19 has rapidly spread at the globe; it has concerned important awareness and brought unparalleled efforts, ensuing in stops of routine activities and changes in day-to-day behavioral patterns of the public. To alleviate its impact on health bodies and systems, societies, and economies, many countries have adopted protective procedures such as social or spatial distancing, using protective gloves and masks, as well as frequently hand washing; these have been extensively implemented. We find elderly being the most vulnerable group, pandemic has a great impact on the elderly's life. This paper, highlight the impact of COVID 19 on elderly and its effect on their physical and daily routines, psycho-spiritual aspects, social and family relationships and to identify preventive measures taken by elderly their response to Governmental measures. Descriptive research design is used in this study. The universe of this study consists of senior citizens of Kochi city. Snowball sampling is used in the study. Data was collected through online using Google form.

Keywords: Elderly, COVID -19, Social Distancing, Immune System, Senior Citizen.

1.0 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unexpected challenges and an inconsistent intimidation to humanity, especially to the senior citizens lives, relationships and well-being. It has created a long-term impact on elderly in a restrained environment. There is a rigorous form of pandemic to the risks of isolation, physical, psychological, social, spiritual crisis that affect the elderly. The presence of senior citizens in Indian homes more ordinary than the most. And, the novel corona virus has been found to increase the hurdles that aging brings to elderly people. COVID-19 has been found to have been graver among elderly people with existing health problems. The elderly does not have as strong an immune system so they are more vulnerable to communicable disease. They are also more likely to have conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or kidney disease, which deteriorate their body's capacity to fight infectious disease. The elderly might also have loneliness or mobility challenges. Since they are isolated, they are deprived of getting information, meeting people, collect and stock food, and attend functions. In several societies, seniors are more likely to live in poverty, which makes their life more miserable.

Though the older adults, whose quality of life and rights are being directly affected by the corona virus, however, older persons have a higher chance of severe symptoms, complications and death, especially those aged 80 or over. In addition, studies show that pre-existing chronic or degenerative conditions are also risk factors associated with a higher probability of severe illness and death as a result of COVID-19, and it is well known that those co-morbidities are more common among older persons.

Many senior citizens live alone and are under pressure with basic like food, domestic utilities and hygiene along with the persistent fear of the pandemic. Social engagements and contacts are rather unseen but play a significant role in physical and mental health of the elderly. Constrains in social functioning is generally associated with vulnerability to ill health, elderly depression and precipitate mortality. The containment measures in the pandemic related social distancing often translated to an absolute social alienation of the elderly. Limited visits by family members, indirect stigma associated with the age-related helplessness to COVID-19, and restriction of movement have constricted various avenues of the social life of elderly for a substantial duration. An extensive proportion of elderly had to face job layoffs or pause in their existing employment leading to decreased earning resources in the existing pandemic.

2.0 Review of literature

Shree Mishra, Rosali Bhoi, JP Russel Ravan, Santanu Nath, Nilamadhab Kar, Susanta Kumar Padhy in their paper on 'COVID-19 pandemic and care of elderly: measures and challenges' reviews the multifaceted challenges (physical vulnerability, access to health services, stigma, "infodemic", lack of social support, employment issues, elderly staying with vulnerable family members and others) concerning the elderly population, since the emergence of the pandemic. It also explores the practical solutions to prevent and contain infection, which may alleviate the physical, mental and social aftermath of the pandemic in this population. Jallavi Panchamia, Bhavya Bhagat, Vishakha Bharati, Anushree Joshi,Dileep Mavalankar in their study on 'Low COVID-19 mortality in old age homes in western India: an empirical study' try to understand the effect of Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on western



Indian elderly care homes and aimed to know the actions taken by administration of homes and challenges faced during the lockdown period. Debanjan Banerjee in his study on ‘The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on elderly mental health’ put forward the objectives like COVID-19 is a pandemic with global health threat, Elderly are most vulnerable for severity and mortality, Elderly are most susceptible to mental health problems related to such pandemics, Special care needs to be taken for geriatric mental health during such crisis.

3.0 The general objective of the study is to study on the impact of COVID-19 on elderly.

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

- To find out the Socio -economic profile of the respondents
- To find out the impact of COVID 19 on the physical and daily routines of elderly
- To understand the effect of COVID on the psycho- Spiritual aspects of elderly
- To find out the effect of COVID 19 on the social and family relations of elderly
- To identify the preventive measures taken by elderly

4.0 Methodology

The development of COVID-19 has shown that the pandemic has a differentiated impact on different people. In this regard, senior citizens have specific vulnerabilities and, given the heterogeneities within and between countries, it is important to turn an attention on those aspects and form an overview of the latest situation. The socio-demographic vulnerabilities dealt with here that affect elderly in particular include the degree of population ageing in the country, given that advanced age is a risk factor. The pandemic also affects different territories in different ways. In fact, the health and economic crisis has emphasized the vulnerability, high levels of poverty and weak social protection and health systems. So, this study focuses, on the impact of COVID 19 on the physical and daily routines, psycho-spiritual aspects, social and family relationship of the elderly and also try to identify the preventive measures taken by the elderly.

4.1 Material and methods

Descriptive research design is used in this study. The universe of this study consists of senior citizens of Kochi city. Snowball sampling is used in the study. Data was collected through online using Google form.

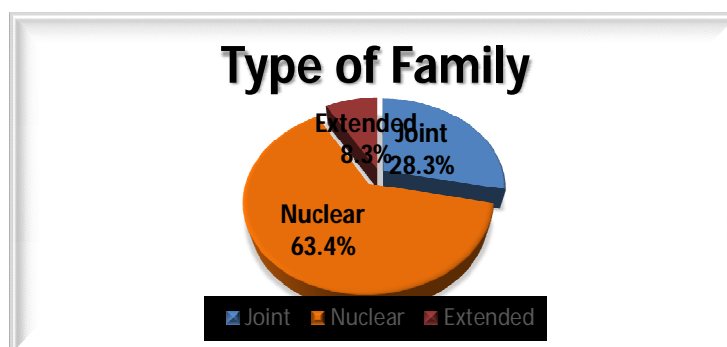
5.0 Data Analysis and findings

The primary data collected using questionnaire. It was daily edited coded, analyzed and interpreted using Google form and charts and diagrams were also prepared using goggle form to make it more attractive.

Socio economic profile

In this objective, Socio-economic profile of the respondents it was found that a high percentage (68.3%) of the respondents belong to the age category of 60-70, With regard to gender, high percentages of the respondents (76.7%) are female. It was found, sixty three percent of the respondents are living in rural areas and on the other hand 36.7% are living in urban area. With regard to the level of education of the respondents, it was found that 36.7% have only below SSLC education. Sixty three percent of the respondents belong to nuclear families. It was found that the majority of the respondents (96.6%) are not living alone. It was found that all the respondents (100%) are aware of the COVID -19. It was also found that, majority of the respondents (75%) are disturbed by the daily news and updated on COVID -19.

Figure No. 1 Type of Family





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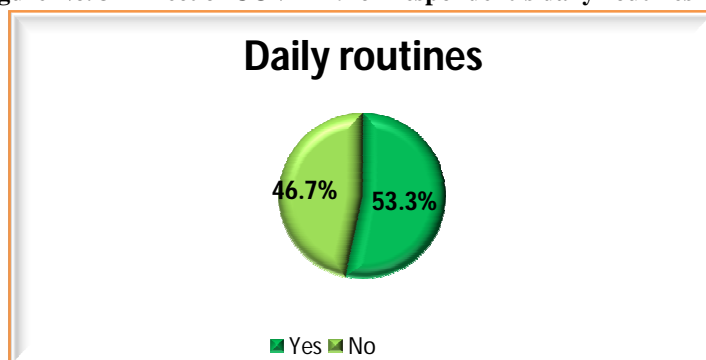
Figure No. 2 Disturbed through daily news & updates of COVID 19



Impact of COVID 19 on physical and daily routines of elderly

With regard to the Second objective, it was found that 53.3% of the respondents opine that the pandemic has affected their routine and 46.7% do not feel effect on their daily routine. Mainly the pandemic has restrained them from daily meeting their friends, relatives and children and also their daily income.

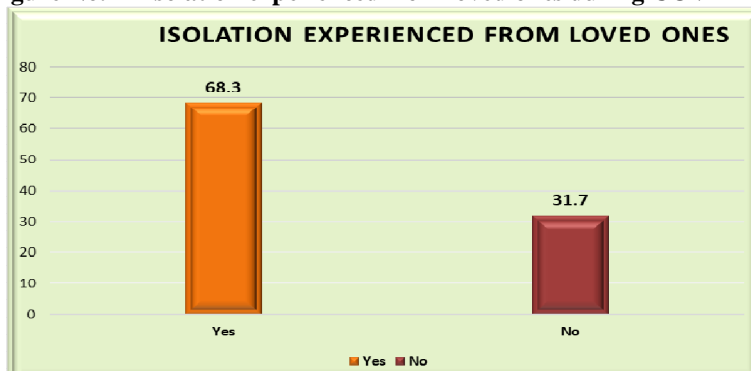
Figure No. 3 Effect of COVID 19 on respondent's daily routines



Impact of COVID-19 on the psycho- Spiritual aspects of elderly

With regard to the impact of pandemic on the psycho -Spiritual aspects of the respondents it was found that, 68.3% of the respondents feel isolated from their loved ones and 31.7% do not feel the isolation. While 76.7% feel that pandemic has created an anxiety and fear in them and on the other hand 23.3% do not experience this anxiety and fear. Regarding the Spiritual life 55% of the respondents feel that the pandemic has an impact on their spiritual life while 45% do not feel. Among the 55% of the respondents 32% feels that they are not able to go for worship while 1% had opinion that pandemic has increased their faith in God.

Figure No. 4 Isolation experienced from loved ones during COVID 19

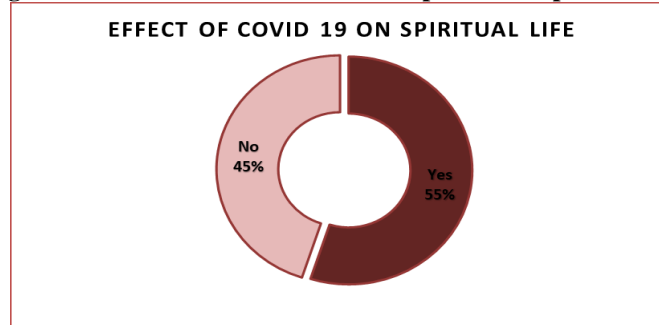




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Figure No. 5 Effect of COVID 19 on respondent's Spiritual Life



Impact of COVID 19 on the social and family relations of elderly

With regard to the impact of COVID -19 on the social and family relations of the respondents, it was found that 65% of the respondents feel that pandemic has impact on their social relations and 35% do not feel. Majority of the respondents feel that COVID has restrained them from meeting their friends and relatives, from attending functions and from going to their club. At the same time, it was found that 70% of the respondents are trying to maintain their social relationship through phone calls and video calls while 30% do not maintain the social relationship. Regarding the family relationship it was found that 56.7% of the respondents feel that COVID has affected their family life while 43.3% do not feel. It was found mainly pandemic has affected their family gatherings and celebrations, Financial crisis faced in the family and fear and isolation created in them.

Figure No. 6 Effect of COVID 19 on respondent's Social relationships

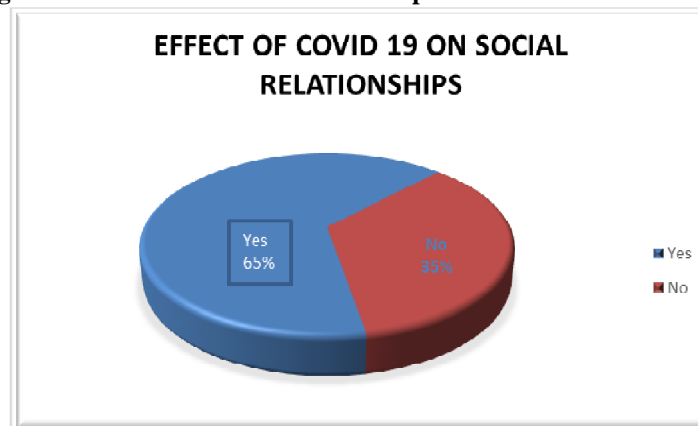
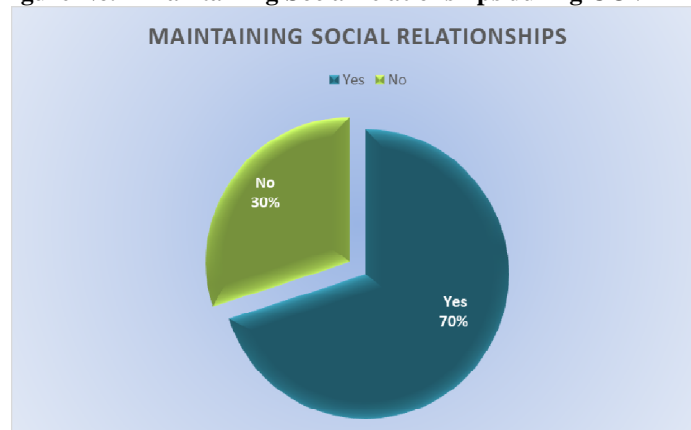


Figure No. 7 Maintaining Social relationships during COVID 19

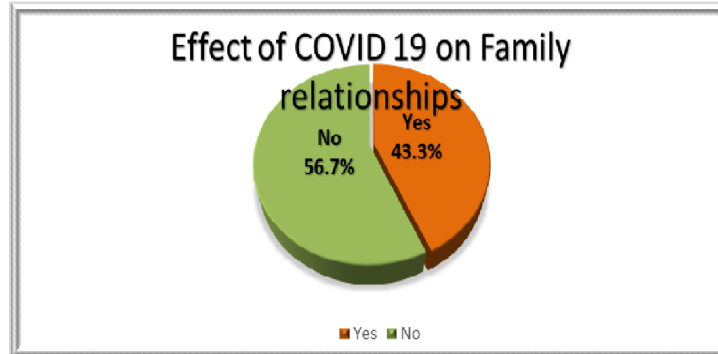




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Figure No. 8 Effect of COVID 19 on respondent's Family relationships



Preventive measures taken by elderly

With regard to the preventive measures taken the respondents, it was found that 81.7% of the respondents take preventive measures while 18.3% do not take. It was found from those who take preventives majority 57.14% use mask and sanitizer regularly, 14.29% keep social distancing and take vaccination. 8.16% of the respondents take natural tips for immunity building and 6.12% of the respondents avoid unnecessary visits and outings. Regarding the vaccine taken by the respondents it was found that 56.7% of the respondents have taken the vaccine while 43.3% have not taken the vaccine. Regarding the reasons for not taken the vaccine, it was found that 80.8 % had the reason as deficiency of vaccine, few were taking other medicines, doctors suggested few respondents not to take the vaccine and only 1% is not interested in taking vaccine.

Figure No. 9 Preventive measures taken or not to avoid COVID 19

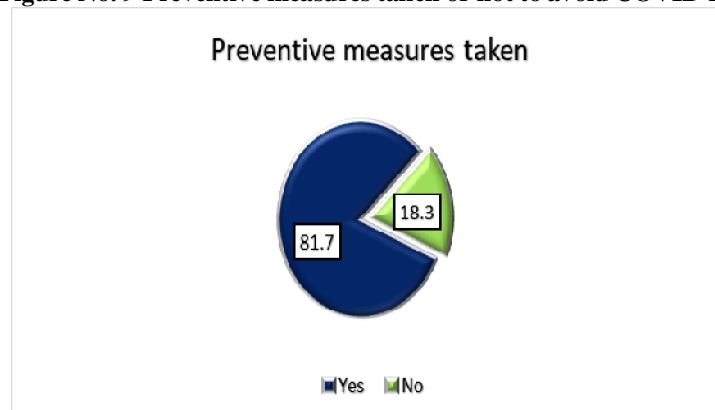
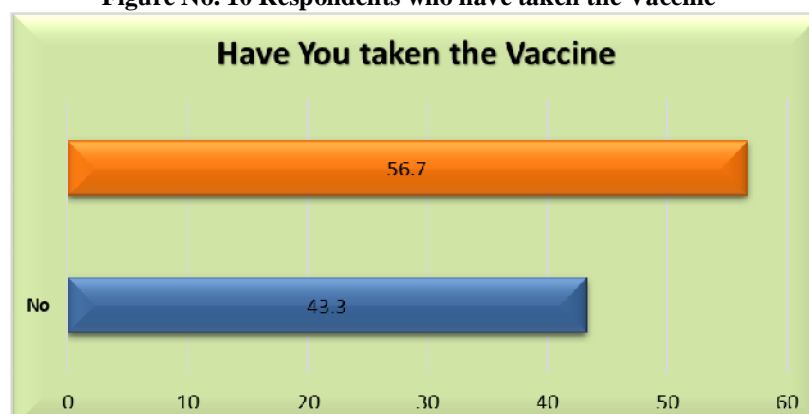


Figure No. 10 Respondents who have taken the Vaccine





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Table No. 1 Reasons for not taken the vaccine

Reasons for not taken Vaccine	Frequency	Percent
Deficiency of Vaccine	21	80.8
Taking other medicine	2	7.7
Not interested	1	3.8
Doctors suggested not to take	2	7.7
Total	26	100

6.0 Conclusion

The ongoing pandemic has created an anxiety and fear in everyone especially in the elderly population. The government has taken measures to alleviate these concerns. While some older people are privileged enough to be able to stay indoors without compromising on their quality of life, working class senior citizens or individuals who live alone have been forced to go out. In addition to the shortage of medical equipment and hospital beds, the elderly are likely to have internalised a sense of redundancy. The Government needs to pay keen attention to this vulnerable population, providing more vaccine and taking more measures to keep them engaged and active and to eradicate isolation and fear from them and enable them to live gracefully.

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 Number of Characters: 14,762 (approx.)