

Health at Old Ages in India: Statistical Exposition of Its Socio-Cultural and Gender Dimensions

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Abstract

This work attempts to develop a conceptual framework to model health of older adults (OA) in association with various socioeconomic and cultural factors. For this purpose, four different populations of OAs are considered namely rural male (RM), rural female (RF), urban male (UM) and urban female (UF). The data from the 60th Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) (2004) has been used for the purpose. Diseases and disabilities are two components of health of OAs. These components are measured by the count of diseases and the count of disabilities an OA is suffering from. The data indicates that the Poisson and Negative Binomial distributions are appropriate respectively to model these components of health. The association between these two components is not found to be strong in all the four populations. But these components are found to be significantly associated with various socio-economic and cultural factors. In case of diseases, the effects of age, marital status and number of children are significant. Education has effect in rural areas alone and the effect of caste differentials is visible in case of female populations only. Religion has significant effect in rural areas only. The effects of household economic status and economic dependency are also significant. The type of economic activity of a household also affects disease prevalence among the male populations. The amount of land possessed by a household affects the disease prevalence among rural OA only. In the case of disabilities, age and economic dependency of the OAs have significant effect in all the OA populations. Marital status has significant effect only for disabilities among RF, UM and UF populations. Disabilities among UM and RM are associated with education and caste respectively. Religion plays a significant role in the cases of disabilities among rural population.