Comparative study on perceived abuse and social neglect among rural and urban geriatric population

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INTRODUCTION
The population of elderly has continued to grow. With this projected increase in the elderly population, prevalence of elder abuse is escalating. Abuse of elderly is not a new phenomenon. Elder abuse and neglect may occur in any setting such as rural or urban, private homes or within health care setting. Recognizing abuse of elderly involves a multidisciplinary approach. Nurses as a part of multidisciplinary team can play a vital role in recognition of elder abuse because access to abused person in the home is difficult, so nurses can survey the home environment and evaluates all aspects of elder abuse.¹¹

SUBJECTS AND METHODS
This was a comparative study on perceived abuse and social neglect. A total of 200 elderly of age 60 years and above residing in a rural area (n = 100) and urban area (n = 100) of district Ludhiana were selected. Cluster random sampling technique was used to select the study area (rural area Pohir

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and urban area Jamalpur) and simple random sampling technique was used to select the study sample. Background information was obtained by using demographic profile sheet (Part A). Part B of tool consisted of 40 statements to assess perceived abuse which were distributed in four areas namely: Physical abuse (Q1 to Q10), psychological abuse (Q11 to Q25), financial abuse (Q26 to Q35) and sexual abuse (Q36 to Q40) (test retest reliability of the tool was \( r = 0.82 \)). Part C consisted of 10 statements to assess social neglect (test retest reliability of the tool was \( r = 0.97 \)). Each statement has five options “always,” “often,” “sometimes,” “rarely” and “never” and scored as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Research tool was given to experts for content validity and validated on target population.

**RESULTS**

As shown in Table 1 sociodemographic profile of subjects showed that majority (63%) and (76%) of subjects were from age group 60 to 70 years, nearly half (45%) and (55%) of subjects were females in rural and urban area, respectively. It was found that (68%) and (37%) of subjects were illiterate in both rural and urban area, respectively. Majority of subjects (85% and 73%) in rural and urban areas were residing in nuclear families, respectively. Data show that (41%) of subjects were financially independent in a rural area and (52%) of subjects were fully dependent on caregiver in the urban area. Furthermore in rural area, more than half (51%) of subjects were having monthly income \(<5000/-\) whereas in urban area (52%) of subjects were having no monthly income. It was found that (72% and 67%) of subjects were married in both rural and urban area respectively. More than half (54%) of subjects were living with spouse and children in a rural area whereas (62%) of subjects were living with spouse and children in the urban area. Regarding their source of income, (30%) of subjects had both pension and caregiver in a rural area whereas (52%) of subjects had caregiver as a source of income in the urban area.

Of 200 subjects, total of 39 subjects had reported perceived physical abuse in both rural and urban areas. Majority of subjects residing in rural area reported all forms of perceived physical abuse except receiving care in exchange of property and taken unexplained loans, which were reported by subjects residing in rural [Figure 3].

Of 200 subjects, total of 130 subjects had reported perceived psychological abuse in both rural and urban areas. Majority of subjects in urban area had reported various forms of perceived financial abuse except receiving care in exchange of property and taken unexplained loans, which were reported by subjects residing in rural [Figure 3].

Of 200 subjects, a total of 62 subjects had reported perceived financial abuse in both rural and urban areas. Majority of subjects residing in urban area had reported various forms of perceived financial abuse except receiving care in exchange of property and taken unexplained loans, which were reported by subjects residing in rural [Figure 3].

### Table 1: Socio demographic profile of subjects residing in selected rural and urban areas N = 200

| Socio-demographic characteristics | Rural (n = 100) | Urban (n = 100) | Total f (%)
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Age in years                     |                |                |                |
| 60 – 70                          | 63             | 76             | 139 (69.5)     |
| 71 – 80                          | 26             | 15             | 041 (20.5)     |
| 81 and above                     | 11             | 9              | 020 (10.0)     |
| Gender                           |                |                |                |
| Male                             | 43             | 45             | 088 (44.0)     |
| Female                           | 57             | 55             | 112 (56.0)     |
| Educational status               |                |                |                |
| Illiterate                       | 68             | 37             | 105 (52.5)     |
| Elementary                       | 26             | 25             | 051 (25.5)     |
| Higher secondary                 | 4              | 30             | 034 (17.0)     |
| Graduation or above              | 2              | 8              | 010 (05.0)     |
| Type of family                   |                |                |                |
| Joint                            | 15             | 27             | 042 (21.0)     |
| Nuclear                          | 85             | 73             | 158 (79.0)     |
| Financial status                 |                |                |                |
| Fully dependent on caregiver     | 29             | 52             | 081 (40.5)     |
| Partially dependent on caregiver | 30             | 7              | 037 (18.5)     |
| Independent                      | 41             | 41             | 082 (41.0)     |
| Monthly income of elderly (in Rs.)|                |                |                |
| Nil                              | 29             | 52             | 081 (40.5)     |
| \(<5000/-\)                      | 51             | 15             | 066 (33.0)     |
| \(5001-10,000/-\)                | 15             | 11             | 026 (13.0)     |
| \(>10,000/-\)                    | 5              | 22             | 027 (13.5)     |
| Marital Status                   |                |                |                |
| Married                          | 72             | 67             | 139 (69.5)     |
| Never married                    | 2              | 1              | 03 (1.5)       |
| Widow/widower                    | 26             | 32             | 58 (29.0)      |
| Living Status                    |                |                |                |
| With Spouse                      | 4              | 5              | 09 (4.5)       |
| With Children                    | 26             | 32             | 58 (29.0)      |
| With Spouse & Children           | 68             | 62             | 130 (65%)      |
| With Relatives                   | 2              | 1              | 03 (1.5)       |
| Source of Income                 |                |                |                |
| Pension                          | 17             | 22             | 39 (19.5%)     |
| Business/Self employed           | 24             | 19             | 43 (21.5%)     |
| Caregiver                        | 29             | 52             | 81 (40.5%)     |
| Both pension & caregiver         | 30             | 7              | 37 (18.5%)     |

**Figure 1:** Comparison of perceived physical abuse profile among elderly residing in rural and urban areas. *One subject may have multiple responses*
Out of 200 subjects, total of 133 subjects had reported social neglect in both rural and urban areas. Majority of subjects residing in urban had reported various forms of social neglect except not invited by relatives, not taken to social functions and their friends do not involve them in activities which were commonly reported by subjects residing in rural [Figure 4].

As shown in Table 2 perceived physical abuse was higher among elderly residing in rural, and it was found to be statistically significant (P = 0.01). The perceived psychological abuse was higher among elderly residing in urban, but it was found to be statistically not significant (P = 0.32). The perceived financial abuse was higher among elderly residing in urban as there is significant mean score difference (P = 0.03) and social neglect was higher among elderly residing in urban, but it was found to be statistically not significant (P = 0.32).

As shown in Table 3 physical abuse was highly perceived by female elderly as the difference of mean score was found to be statistically significant (P = 0.05) whereas perceived financial abuse was significantly higher (P = 0.001) among male elderly.

As shown in Table 4 there was no significant relationship found between perceived abuse, social neglect and age of elderly at P ≤ 0.05.

As shown in Table 5 physical abuse was highly perceived by elderly who were widow/widower as the difference of mean score was found to be significant (P = 0.001).

Table 2: Comparison of perceived abuse and social neglect among elderly residing in selected rural and urban areas n=200

| Abuse profile | Mean±SD (n=100) | t  | P     |
|---------------|-----------------|----|-------|
| Rural         | Urban           |
| Physical abuse| 11.86±3.63      | 2.46| 0.01* |
| Psychological abuse | 25.12±9.62 | 0.98| 0.32NS |
| Financial abuse | 11.51±2.38     | 2.10| 0.03* |
| Social neglect | 15.54±5.03      | 0.99| 0.32NS |

Table 3: Relationship of mean perceived abuse and social neglect score with gender n=200

| Abuse profile | Gender    | t  | P     |
|---------------|-----------|----|-------|
| Male (n=88)   | Female (n=112) | Mean±SD |
| Physical abuse| 10.86±1.97 | 1.95| 0.05* |
| Psychological abuse | 24.88±9.44 | 1.18| 0.23NS |
| Financial abuse | 13.02±3.56 | 4.82| 0.001* |
| Social neglect | 16.42±5.19  | 1.36| 0.17NS |

Table 4: Relationship of mean perceived abuse and social neglect score with age n=200

| Abuse profile | Age in years | F (P) |
|---------------|--------------|-------|
| Mean±SD      |              |       |
| 60-70 (n=139) | 71-80 (n=41) | 81 and above (n=20) |
| Physical abuse| 11.14±2.70   | 12.55±5.01 | 1.89 (0.15) |
| Psychological abuse | 24.98±9.54  | 28.15±10.39 | 1.66 (0.18) |
| Financial abuse | 11.81±2.94  | 12.85±3.19 | 1.07 (0.33) |
| Social neglect | 15.41±4.64  | 17.85±4.92 | 2.00 (0.07) |

Table 5: Relationship of mean perceived abuse and social neglect score with gender n=200

| Abuse profile | Age in years | F (P) |
|---------------|--------------|-------|
| Mean±SD      |              |       |
| 60-70 (n=139) | 71-80 (n=41) | 81 and above (n=20) |
| Physical abuse| 11.14±2.70   | 12.55±5.01 | 1.89 (0.15) |
| Psychological abuse | 24.98±9.54  | 28.15±10.39 | 1.66 (0.18) |
| Financial abuse | 11.81±2.94  | 12.85±3.19 | 1.07 (0.33) |
| Social neglect | 15.41±4.64  | 17.85±4.92 | 2.00 (0.07) |

*Not significant P>0.05, **Significant P≤0.05. SD – Standard deviation
As shown in Table 6 elderly who were partially dependent perceived more physical abuse as the difference of mean score was statistically significant ($P = 0.01$) and financial abuse was highly perceived by elderly who were independent as there is significant mean score difference (0.001).

**Sexual abuse**  
None of the subject residing in selected rural and urban areas had reported sexual abuse due to the fact that this type of abuse is hidden.

**DISCUSSION**

In the present study, researcher found that perceived psychological abuse (59%) and social neglect (59%) were most common followed by financial abuse (25%) and physical abuse (25%) among elderly residing in rural. These findings are consistent with study findings reported by Gaikwad et al. who conducted a study on perceived abuse among elderly residing in rural areas of Bengaluru,

whereas perceived psychological abuse (71%) was more prevalent form of abuse followed by financial abuse (37%) and physical abuse (14%) among elderly residing in the urban area. The findings were consistent with the study conducted in the urban community of Chennai by Chokkanathan and Lee.

In the present study researcher investigated that perceived physical abuse was higher among elderly residing in rural areas, whereas perceived psychological abuse, financial abuse, and social neglect were higher among elderly residing in urban areas. These findings were supported by study findings of Vasundra(2011) which revealed that physical abuse of elderly was more common in rural areas whereas emotional abuse and various forms of social neglect was most common in urban areas of Chennai.

The present study revealed that perceived physical abuse and psychological abuse was higher among female elderly. Similarly, a study by Chokkanathan and Lee reported that a significantly greater number of women experienced verbal and physical abuse as compared to men.

The present study findings indicate that perceived physical abuse and psychological abuse were higher among elderly who were widow/widower whereas perceived financial abuse and social neglect were higher among elderly who were never married. Similarly, a study conducted by Risco et al., in Spain they found that there was a greater risk of elder abuse in unmarried or widower.

It was found that perceived financial abuse was higher among elderly who were financially independent. A similar finding were reported by Rahman and Gaafary in rural areas of Mansora city, which revealed that perceived financial abuse was higher among elderly who were financially independent.

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