

RIN Online Workshop 2024

Health Seeking Behavior among Older Persons in Myanmar

Presented by

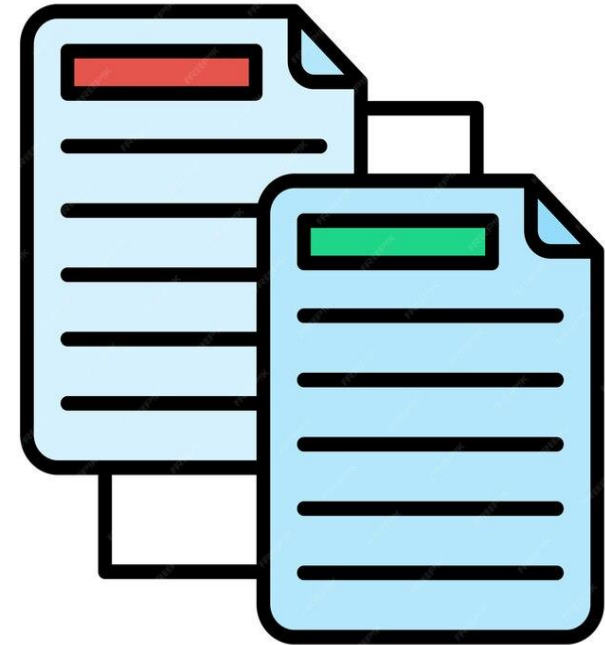
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Introduction

Global Aging Population: A Rapidly Growing Trend

- Estimated 727 million people aged 65+ worldwide in 2020, projected to double to 1.5 billion by 2050
- Share of older persons in global population
- By 2050, 1 in 6 people globally will be aged 65 years or older

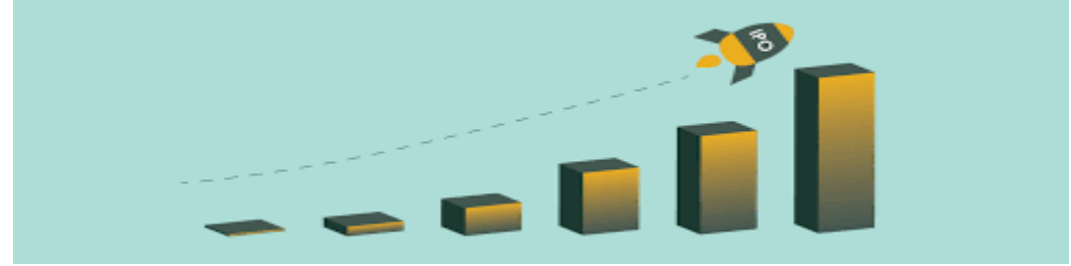


Myanmar's Aging Population

- The largest country in mainland Southeast Asia
- A high crude death rate of 7%
- Low life expectancy at birth of 69.4 years
- The situation of older persons in Myanmar is of particular concern
- In 2019, Myanmar's population was 51.4 million



Future Projections



- By 2050, the proportion of older individuals is expected to rise to 21.4% (Department of Population and UNFPA, 2005).

Challenges

- The global increase in the elderly population

Addressing the Gap in Elderly Health Care in Myanmar



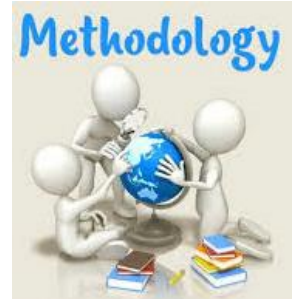
- Developing countries including Myanmar
- The WHO emphasizes the need to better understand aging-related issues
- Despite previous studies on aging in Myanmar, there is a significant gap in research on aging health care

Objectives of the Study

- to identify the health seeking behavior of older peoples
- to find out the association between the socio-demographic characteristics and health seeking behavior of older peoples and
- to investigate the determinants of health seeking behavior of older peoples in Myanmar.



Methodology



Data Source:

- Data from the 2019 Inter-censal Survey (ICS), marking the first government survey since the 2014 Census and supporting preparations for the 2024 Census.

Analysis Techniques:

- Descriptive methods were employed to assess health-seeking behavior.
- Pearson's Chi-square test analyzed associations with socio-demographic characteristics.
- Binary logistic regression examined determinants of health-seeking behavior, with data analyzed using SPSS version 23.

Results and Findings



Defining Older Population:

- Global Standard: The United Nations defines older persons as those aged 60 and over (UN DESA, 2015).
- Myanmar Context: Age 60 is also used in Myanmar, reflecting the mandatory retirement age in the public sector as of the 2019 ICS.
- Study Definition: For this study, individuals aged 60 and over are categorized as the older population.

Trends in Myanmar's Older Population

- Data Comparison: trends from the 1983 and 2014 the 2019 ICS.
- Growth: The number of people aged 60+ increased from 2.2 million in 1983 to 5.2 million in 2019.
- Proportion: Over four decades, the median age rose from 20.2 to 28.2 years, indicating an aging population and a significant decrease in the proportion of children aged 0-14.



Health Status of Older Persons Visiting Health Care Facilities

- Among older persons who visited health care facilities, 28.55% reported good health, 50.14% fair health, and 21.31% poor health

Gender Differences

- 31.13% of males reported good health, compared to 26.91% of females.
- Additionally, 48.95% of males and 50.90% of females reported fair health, while 19.92% of males and 22.18% of females reported poor health.
- Male older persons in Myanmar generally reported better health status than their female counterparts.



Health Status by Urban vs. Rural and Age



Urban vs. Rural

- 30.60% of urban older individuals reported good health, compared to 27.4% of rural older individuals. Urban older persons also had a higher percentage of fair health (49.83%) compared to their rural counterparts (50.3%).

Age Factor

- Among those aged 80 and above, only 21.36% reported good health, while 50.14% reported fair health and 21.31% reported poor health.
- Urban older people in Myanmar generally reported better health status than their rural peers, with a notable decline in health status among those aged 80 and older.

Health Care Facility Visits Among Older People



Visit

- Out of 5.16 million older individuals, 38% (2.1 million) visited a health care facility in the past year.

Sector Preference

- A higher percentage of older people visited public sector facilities, with 58.7% of males and 54.9% of females preferring government hospitals over private sector options.

Facility Use

- Among those who visited, 37% used government hospitals, 38.4% went to private hospitals or clinics, and 6.6% visited rural health centers (Table 3).

Reasons for Visiting Health Care Facilities

Common Reason

- 37.6% of older individuals visited health care facilities due to illness needing consultations and medicines (out-patient).

Other Reasons

- 26.4% visited for maintenance medication, and 13.4% for routine or regular consultations/follow-ups.



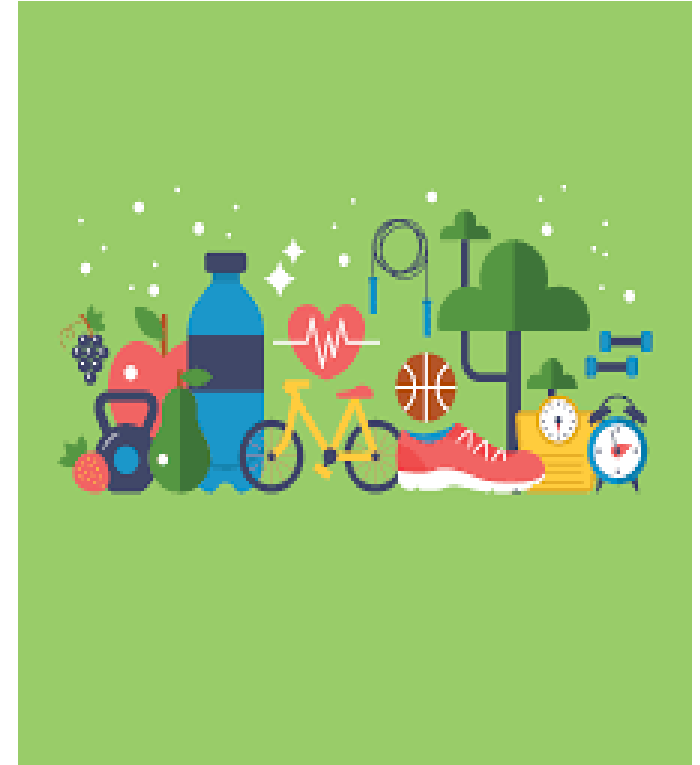
Determinants of Health-Seeking Behavior

Significance

- All socioeconomic and demographic characteristics analyzed

Analysis Method

- A binary logistic regression model was used to investigate determinants



Binary Logistic Regression Results



Rural vs. Urban

- Rural elderly are more likely to visit public sector health facilities than urban elderly

Gender

- Female elderly are less likely to visit public sector facilities compared to males

Age

- Those aged 70-79 and 80+ are more likely to visit public sector facilities than those aged 60-69

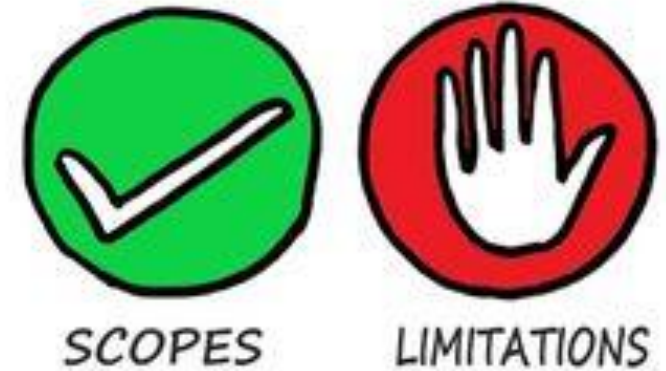
Education and Support

- Graduates, those without pensions, allowances, or benefits, and those not receiving support are more likely to use public sector facilities

Reasons for Visits

- Elderly are more likely to visit public sector facilities for emergency care or illness rather than for routine consultations

Limitations of the Study



Scope

- The study focused on health-seeking behavior but did not explore underlying reasons, morbidity, social well-being, or quality of life of the elderly.

Excluded Factors

- Factors such as household income, religion, ethnicity, culture, lifestyle, travel time to health facilities, awareness of services, and perceptions towards health-seeking behavior were not considered.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Aging Trend

- Over the last four decades, Myanmar's median age increased from 20.2 to 28.2 years, reflecting an older population (Department of Population, 2020).

Health Status

- 28.55% of older persons reported good health, 50.14% fair health, and 21.31% poor health.
- Urban older people and males generally reported better health compared to their rural and female counterparts.

Health Care Utilization

- Older individuals tend to rely more on public sector facilities, especially government hospitals, for health care.
- Socioeconomic and demographic factors significantly influence health care choices, with education, age, and lack of financial support leading to a preference for public sector services.

Challenges

- Despite the theoretical free access to public health services, additional costs for medicines and gifts, along with limited private facilities in rural areas, affect utilization patterns.
- Traditional lifestyles also contribute to the preference for public sector facilities.



Recommendations



- To address aging challenges, Myanmar should expand public health care facilities, improve infrastructure, and enhance support for older people.
- Policies should focus on increasing resources for health care, pensions, and overall welfare, with active involvement from government, NGOs, and INGOs.

