

ABSTRACT

This was a cross-sectional study of elderly persons living in the institutional, rural, and urban settings. It was conducted to determine prevalence of depression and to determine the factors which may act as protective mechanisms against depression.

Elderly males and females were chosen haphazardly from senior citizens clubs in Kingston and St. Andrew. The Golden Age Home in Kingston was the institution used for the selection of elderly, using the accidental chunk method.

The study revealed that the highest prevalence of depression was in the institutional setting followed by urban and then rural areas. Young elderly were at greater risk of developing depression as were those with no income. The elderly who were not depressed were more likely to have adequate levels of privacy and live with children with whom they had satisfying relationships.

These findings disclosed that there is a significant level of depression among elderly, and certain members of the elderly population should be closely monitored for signs of depression. As well, programmes need to be developed to cope with the emotional and economic needs of the elderly.