

Abstract

The issues that impact on the health status of the elderly are complex and inter-related. This study sought to assess the health status of persons 60 years and older and its association with increasing age, between genders, income, cognitive, physical, and emotional functioning of the elderly as well as the impact their contribution to self-care and that of the household. Of the 131 persons 60 years and over, 21 % were handicapped, 20% incontinence, 14 % visual impaired, 12.8% hearing impaired, 42% disabled (according scale used), 21.6% unable to prepare meals, 62.6% had arthritis, 42% with a diagnosis of Hypertension, 24.4 % with a diagnosis of Diabetes. Of all 131 whose blood pressures were measured, 29% with a measure systolic of 160mmHg. and over and 36% with a measured diastolic blood pressure of over 90mmHg).. There was noted a decline in cognitive functioning and increasing frequency and degree of handicap, disability (incontinence, visual/hearing impairment) and ability to take the bus with increasing age. Thus as expected there was a decrease the capacity and actual contribution to self care, house keeping and child care. They however serve to a high proportion to their perceived capacity to assist in the household and contributors to the family. The older elderly (75 years and over) have high number of health problems and put increasing demand on the health sector and society. From the data of this survey, increasing age has a heavy toll on the elderly as they make the transition from "young elderly" (60 - 74 years) to "old elderly" (75 years and older) particularly among females Although the old elderly female's health faces the greatest immediate threat decline, the young elderly male appears to be

an emerging at risk group. The overall coverage by the Jamaica Drugs for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) as measured by this survey of 116 eligible persons in the communities of Marverly and Drewsland is 8 (7%). This study indicates a low coverage of the programme in these two inner-city communities at the time of the survey. Identified “bottle-necks” at the critical stages of accessibility of sites of registration and participating pharmacies, as well as sufficient information, along with that of low acceptability of this and other government programmes. However as the Jamaica Drugs for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) has a continuously registration process, the coverage is expected to improve over time but the pace and extent at which this occurs seems to be dependent on relieving the identified “bottle necks”.