Socioeconomic Profile and Nutritional Status of Aged Garo Ethnic People

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Abstract:

An observational cross-sectional study was conducted at Mymensingh district to explore nutritional status of aged Garo ethnic people. Face to face interview was carried out and convenient sampling technique was used to collect data and verbal consent was taken from community leader prior to interview. Nutritional status was determined according to BMI cut off value for Asian population. About 60% respondents were from 60-69 years age group. Male and female distribution was nearly same. Illiteracy was highest (38%) followed by primary (34%) and SSC (20%). About half of the respondents were housewife followed by day labor (18%), farmer (14%), service (10%) and business (8%). Two third of respondents came from low income family. About half of the respondents were normal in terms of nutritional status followed by underweight (30%), overweight (16%) and obese (8%). It is concluded that one third of study population were underweight which is alarming for various morbidity.

Key words: Garo Ethnic Community, Nutritional status, Aged people

INTRODUCTION

In modern age malnutrition continues to be a serious public health problem [1]. Despite the economic growth observed in developing countries, malnutrition and particularly under-

nutrition is still highly prevalent [2]. Ageing is an ongoing physiological process. As mortality declining and improved public health interventions which result population ageing a worldwide phenomenon. During 2000-2030, the population of persons aged 60 years and above of the world has been projected to increase by about 550 million to 930 million, increasing from 6.9 to 12% worldwide and 6 to 12% in Asia [3]. Between the years 2000 and 2050, the worldwide proportion of persons over 60 years of age is expected to become more than double, from the current 6.9% to 16.4% [4]. The Garos have a different socio-cultural tradition in comparison with that of mainstream society of Bangladesh. Their family pattern, marriage, inheritage laws, norms and values, food habits, dressing, housing structure, language, cultural and religious festivals etc are different from any other tribal community, and of course not consistent with the tradition of mainstream Bangladeshi common people [5]. Nutritional status is a sensitive indicator of community health and if we want to formulate any strategy to combat malnutrition, measurement of nutritional status is the first step.

METHODOLOGY

This was a cross-sectional survey conducted among conveniently selected 100 Garo ethnic aged people by door to door visit. First of all we took permission from local community leader by making him understand about objective of the study and then he guided us to search Garo people. After introducing us we collected socioeconomic information by face to face interview. Weight was recorded in kilograms by using standard weighting machine. During measuring weight, each subject was asked to bare footed and to remove heavy cloth. For measurement of height, subjects were positioned to stand on the platform, bare footed with their head upright, looking straight forward by using standard height measurement scale.

Height was measured to the nearest 0.1 cm. Nutritional status was determined by BMI cut off value for Asian population. Questionnaires were checked each day after interviewing and again these were carefully checked after completion of all data collection and coded before entering into the computer. To minimize the errors, after entering the data set into the computer, these are checked and resolved by correction. This was a self-funding study and no external fund was provided to carry out this study.

RESULT

About 60% respondents were from 60-69 years age group followed by 38% from 70-79 years and 2% from ≥80 years. (Table 1) Male and female distribution was nearly same. (Figure 1) Illiteracy was highest (38%) followed by primary (34%) and SSC (20%). (Table 2) About half of the respondents were housewife followed by day labor (18%), farmer (14%), service (10%) and business (8%). (Table 3) Two third of respondents came from low income family. (Table 4) About half of the respondents were normal in terms of nutritional status followed by underweight (30%), overweight (16%) and obese (8%). (Table 5)

Table1. Age group of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
60-69	60	60
70-79	38	38
≥80	2	2
Total	100	100
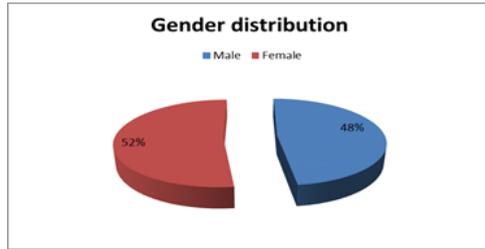
Figure1. Gender distribution

Table 2. Educational status

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiteracy	38	38
Primary	34	34
SSC	20	20
HSC	4	4
Graduate	4	4
Total	100	100

Table 3. Occupational status

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Housewife	50	50
Service	10	10
Business	8	8
Farmer	14	14
Day labor	18	18
Total	100	100

Table 4. Monthly income

Monthly income	Frequency	Percentage
Low	64	64
Middle	26	26
High	10	10
Total	100	100

Table 5. Nutritional status

Nutritional status	Frequency	Percentage
Underweight	30	30
Normal	46	46
Overweight	16	16
Obese	8	8
Total	100	100

DISCUSSION

There are as many as 30 tribal communities living at the different parts of Bangladesh [6]. The Garos are one of them. They mostly live in Mymensingh, Netrokona, Taogail, Sylhet and Sunamgonj districts of our country. Nutritional status of the present study subjects represents gloomy picture. Underweight, normal, overweight and obese were 30%, 46%, 16% and 8% of respondents. Low income as well as illiteracy may be the reason behind that situation. In 2004 a study was conducted in our country, they found that the prevalence of malnutrition among older people living in rural community in Bangladesh was 26% [7]. Body composition and therefore energy stores change during ageing, making malnutrition comprise a greater risk. Many other factors contribute to increasing the risk of malnutrition. A study conducted by Samad and Abedin [8] found that majority of older people are in Bangladesh belong to the age group 60-69 years and same findings was found Taj Uddin and Chowdhury study which has a similarity with the findings of this study [9]. Elderly individuals in rural Bangladesh are either undernourished or at risk of malnourishment where same scenario was present in this study at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. According to Mini Nutritional assessment (MNA) score, result showed that 26% prevalence of protein energy malnutrition and 62% to be at risk of malnutrition were seen in rural Bangladesh. One of the rare studies on adult nutrition in Bangladesh reports chronic energy deficiency prevalence of 63% and 72% among adults (19 years and older) in two selected rural areas [10]. About 4.8% was malnourished, 26.2% was at risk of malnutrition and 69% was well nourished in Mongolian elderly. In terms of body mass index, 4 in 5 of the elderly had values >21 kg/m2 [11].

CONCLUSION

Though half of the respondents were normal regarding nutritional status but still one third were underweight.

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