

# Example of report on barriers to health care among elderly people

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drugs](#)



## **Abstract**

Elderly people are individuals who have surpassed the average life span that human being is supposed to satisfy. These people are usually faced with adverse medical challenges which require extensive attention. However, this is not usually the case. There are challenges that bar them from accessing excellent medical services that would assure their wellness.

Multiple medications challenge proper health for the elderly people following the complications that result from use of various drugs at the same time to treat one disease or to treat various health conditions.

### **Low income also challenges their wellbeing since they cannot access excellent medical services as well as facilities.**

Lack of transportation poses a challenge to the wellbeing of the elderly people since they may not move from one point to the other to look for medical attention.

Doctor's responsiveness is a major requirement in fostering health for elderly people. It has been challenges by consistent decline in the number of nursing homes among other challenges.

Also, old people are extremely fearful of their health conditions which get worse from time to time. They fear certain diseases as well as recovery from certain conditions which have already become worse.

These people require excessive care when they begin developing certain ill health conditions. At some point, they do not access the intended support from their relatives as well as the government.

## **Introduction**

Elderly people can be defined as those people who have surpassed the average life span of a human being. The age is usually characterized with the ending of the human life cycle. Elderly people usually have minimal regenerative capabilities and are usually prone to syndromes, sicknesses as well as diseases than young people. At this situation these people deserve ample care from the people surrounding them as well as from physicians. However, offering these people the right healthcare is usually challenged by various demerits. Some of these challenges are; multiple medications, low income, lack of transportation, doctor's lack of responsiveness, fear and lack of support. However, the problem does not haunt all elderly individuals at the same levels. The mainly affected individuals by this antisocial status are people from the minority races.

## **Multiple medications**

This may be defined as the situation where different types of drugs are prescribed to a patient with the aim of trying to make the drugs work together to eliminate certain health problem. In most cases, the problems of multiple medications have been limited to drug abusers. However, this is not the reality since people in their normal health are also suffering from the multiple medication problems.

Statistics indicate that in the last ten years, there has been a shift in the number of people aged 60 years and above who have been exposed to multiple medications. The percentage has shifted from 22% to 37%. This is an indication that the problem is becoming paramount as time elapses. The

statistics also indicate that approximately 30 million people in America are taking five or more drugs as prescribed by their doctors (LaPook, 2012).

One of the reasons through which multiple medications becomes a problem is following the reaction of some of the drugs that may be prescribed to a patient. Some of the drugs that are prescribed at the same time become harmful as they may react to cause other health problems. This may be rampant among elderly people following the inability of their body systems to heal such problems. This problem may develop to another major health condition which may call for another treatment. This will call for another medication that will make the situation worse (LaPook, 2012).

Also, elderly people are usually posed to adverse health problems which require different treatments. This means that different specialists may be required to treat different health conditions that the patient may be suffering from (LaPook, 2012). The different conditions require different attention as well as medication leading to multiple medications for the patient.

At elderly age people are exposed to adverse chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes. It is indicated that Hispanics, Blacks and American Indians have recorded higher death rates from multiple medications of these diseases than Whites (Bulatao & Anderson, 2004).

These diseases may develop from extensive exposure of the body to toxins that may be released by drugs used to treat one of the health conditions.

## **Low income**

At old age it becomes extremely difficult for individuals to work for them to earn income. Most of these people depend on previous investments and

pensions to pay for their health care. However, the amount of money that these people save may not be adequate to sustain them to a point of paying for their medical bills. It is indicated that approximately 75 million individuals in the United States involved in the baby boomer generation reach retirement age are dependent on eroded savings as well as retirement accounts. The Social Security and Supplemental Security indicates that over 9.4% of elderly people are poor (Cawthorne, 2008). This means that these people cannot access full medical care. Some of them may not even afford the money for examination or consultation money since they have no money to pay the physician.

Low income or lack of income exposes people to poor medical care in various ways. One of the ways is through inability to afford the prescribed medicine. It is not obvious that the drugs that are prescribed in a public hospital will be available. In this case, the patient will be required to purchase the drug in a private hospital. In most cases, drugs sold in private hospitals as well as private pharmacies are expensive and are not affordable to low income earners. Since most elderly people survive on grants by the government as well as insurance covers but at this moment these services may not save them. Since there will always be a substitute the patient will be pushed to use another drug which may not be equally effective as the original prescription (Cawthorne, 2008). The substitution means that the original intention of the doctor to deal with the condition extremely fast will be shattered and the patient will take a low quality drug which may delay the healing process.

Apart from doctor's medication a patient is required to eat healthy food that

is supposed to aid the patient recover extremely fast through natural medicine that is found in certain types of food. At some point, this type of food is exceptionally expensive. This is a major challenge to some of the elderly people since they may not afford to buy this food. The inability to purchase the food that they may be required to eat by the physician poses them to a risk of poor health (Abraham, 1993).

These challenges are likely to face the minorities to a greater extent than it would be among other races. This is following the extensive segregation of minorities in facilities like insurance and grants. In most cases, the minorities are placed on the lower bracket of benefiting from governmental grants and subsidies (Bulatao & Anderson, 2004). This means that they have minimal income as well as privileges that may allow them to access high quality services.

### **Lack of transportation**

Aging comes with loss of energy and reduced muscles strength. Therefore, it becomes exceedingly difficult for people in elderly ages to move around.

They usually require a lot of energy to move from one point to another and it may be extremely difficult for them to have adequate energy that would sustain the movement.

In most cases, health facilities are a bit far from the locality of a patient. Therefore, they will be required to find means through which they will travel to the health facility. Following the low income that most of the elderly people suffer from they will not be able to buy cars that may assist them in their movements. Therefore, it will be extremely difficult for them to reach

the health facility. In such situations most of them wait for people who may carry them to the health facility. To some of them finding an individual who may carry the patients to hospital may become extremely difficult. At old age, all children may have left their maternal homes and the parents are left all alone at home. Therefore, in this condition diseases may easily consume the elderly people.

Although, some of them may afford vehicles other challenges may still follow them. Following the old age and with minimal strength in their bodies it may be extremely hard for some of them to drive. They may be required to look for drivers who would drive them to the hospital. If no one is near to them with the capability to drive the patient may continue suffering at home. Therefore, lack of transportation may hinder them from accessing quality medical services.

### **Doctor's lack of responsiveness**

At elderly age, individuals are required to have close attention of the doctor. Therefore, doctors should respond regularly to the requirements or queries of the patient. There are various ways through which doctor's responsiveness may be enhanced.

One of the main ways through which the responsiveness may be enhanced is through enactment of nursing homes for the elderly people. In these facilities, the patient will always have a doctor in close proximity to assist at any point that he or she may be required by the patient. However, between 2000 and 2009 the number of nursing homes in the United States reduced by 9%. This means that the growing number of elderly patients will not have

adequate facilities that will offer them adequate care from the doctor.

The other cause of reduced responsiveness is extensive burden on few doctors. The number of doctors in the country is not satisfactory to the level of patients. Therefore, the few doctors available are exposed to extensive responsibilities and appointments. At some point, it becomes extremely difficult for the doctors to satisfy the requirements of the citizens. Therefore, the doctor will sometimes forget some of the appointments that they will be required to respond to, which may be dangerous to some of the patients. Following the low number of doctors the services may become extremely expensive. This means that individuals without adequate income will be foregone in favor to those who will have a lot of money to pay the doctors accordingly. Although, this is bound by nursing ethics it is one of the effects. Also, segregation for patients may occur on the basis of their race. Since the minorities do not have adequate number of medical practitioners these group of people are exposed to adverse challenges. Their appointment may be cancelled in favor for another patient of different skin color.

Doctor's transportation may be another challenge. The patient is required pay for all the expenses incurred during the treatment process. The responsiveness of a doctor may be challenged if the patient may not pay for the transport of the doctor to the location of the patient.

## **Fear**

As people get old fear of how long they would survive continues to rein their lives. They remain uncertain of what will follow them in the near future. One of the effects of fear among the elderly patients is challenge to their health.



Whenever these people develop a health problem fear engulfs their livelihood. They always look into the condition as the cause to their death (Hudson, 2009). Therefore, they find no significance in them looking for cure to the health problem.

They also fear that the treatment of a certain condition will make the health situation worse. This bars them from accessing any medical assistance for the condition that they could be suffering from for some time.

Many diseases have been branded as diseases for the old. These diseases include hypertension, and diabetes. Therefore, it becomes fearful to some patients when they develop these conditions as fear that these diseases may never heal (Hudson, 2009). Therefore, patients believe that their life is nearly coming to an end and they refuse to invest on fighting these diseases worsening their health conditions.

The minorities are the main victims of this condition. This is because they have been made fearful of certain conditions through consistent segregations. Therefore, whenever they contract certain diseases they will try to hide from the rest of the society because they do not want to attract trouble and more segregation. For example, heart attack has been identified to be extremely common among Blacks than among whites (Bulatao & Anderson, 2004).

### **Lack of support**

At old age most people are dependent of help from their children or the government. It is not obvious that they will always get the assistance that they require. Several conditions may deny them the assistance that they

require. One of the situations is when the children of the patient are not financial stable. Despite the extent of the willingness that these people may have they may not afford medical bills as well as healthy living for their parents (Hudson, 2009). This means that patients will not access ample health facilities, which will negatively influence their health conditions. The government which is also a major source of assistance for these people may not deliver to the required extent. The government may withdraw some of the grants that it offers to these people (Abraham, 1993). This means that a number of them will suffer since they cannot afford their medical demands. In such conditions, it becomes extremely difficult for these people to withstand certain alarming health conditions.

## **Conclusion**

Old age comes with adverse challenges with health problems being major in the category. They consistently develop health problems that deserve proper medical attention. However, it is challenging for them to acquire ample health care. These challenges are; multiple medications, low income, lack of transportation, doctor's lack of responsiveness, fear and lack of support. However, sufferings are not equal among the citizens. Minorities are the main victims of these challenges.

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