

Correlates of loneliness among older Newar adults in Nepal

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Objective The purpose of this study was to identify significant factors for loneliness in older adults in Nepal.

Methods The subjects (N = 195) were members of the Newar caste/ethnicity, aged 60 years and above (mean (\pm SD) 68.81 (\pm 7.69) years and 52% male) and living in Katmandu City. Data were collected by face-to-face interview using a three-item loneliness scale, developed based on the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale and prepared with a translation and back translation technique from English into Nepalese. The data were analyzed using logistic regression analyses.

Results More than two-thirds of Newar elderly experience some type of loneliness. A statistically significant correlation was found between feelings of loneliness and age, sex, household status, total family size, network size, social participation, self-reported health, chronic health problems, working status, instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), and perceived economic satisfaction. Results of logistic regression analyses showed age, network size, and perceived economic satisfaction to be significant factors for loneliness.

Conclusion Loneliness is an important public health issue, predicting low quality of life among older adults. The present results indicate many elderly Nepalese experience some form of loneliness, with age, network size and perceived economic satisfaction as significant factors. However, this result may not be generalized to the greater population of Nepalese older adults and the external validity of the UCLA Loneliness Scale is an important criterion to examine in future research.

Key words : loneliness, older adults, network size, Nepal

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