

Research Paper

Medical Procedure Problems From the Viewpoint of Elderly Referrals to Healthcare Centers of Hamedan: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Objectives Increasing age is associated with the risk of diseases and increased treatment problems. Due to the aging population and the need for consumption of drugs for chronic diseases of the elderly, understanding health challenges and treatment problems in the elderly is important. Based on this, a qualitative study was performed to identify treatment problems in older people's viewpoint in Hamadan .

Methods & Materials This qualitative study was conducted by content analysis approach. Data were collected through semi-structured propound interview with 15 elderly people having an age average of 66.47±4.47 years, who were referred to health centers in Hamadan city in 2015. Data was gathered by sampling based sexes with a maximum variation of age range of 60 to 75 years, socioeconomic status, and educational level. All interviews were simultaneously handwritten. Data were analyzed using content analysis method. Data strength was confirmed by participants and researchers.

Results Elderly patients had an average age of 66.47 years and a standard deviation of 4.47. Of the 15 participants, there were 6 females and 9 males. Data analysis resulted in extraction of 3 main themes "causes related to doctors, taking medication problems and shortage of drugs." These themes were determined by the following eleven subthemes: "the cost of visits to doctors, distrust of doctors, doctors not caring for the elderly, complications for the elderly, early completion medicines , efficacy, the absence of an alternative drug for existing drugs, many drugs for consumption, use of other drugs, lack of medicines in some pharmacies, and delivery of expired drugs to the elderly in some pharmacies".

Conclusion The results showed that there are problems of treatment in elderly. So after reviewing the problems with appropriate interventions, training can guide and help the elderly in this area. The authorities can also use findings from research in planning.

Key words:

Qualitative study,
Treatment mea-
sures, Drug, Elderly

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Extended Abstract

1. Objectives

In recent years, the decline in fertility, along with increased longevity, has aged the world's population [1]. Moreover, improved living conditions, prevention of diseases, and provision of health services have affected the life expectancy and created a certain stage of life, defined as aging [2]. Aging is directly related to non-communicable diseases, increased medication use and therapeutic problems [3, 4]. Problems of medical procedure affect health, social and economic dimensions of the elderly [5]. Therefore, considering the importance and sensitivity of this issue as one of the challenges of national health system and the lack of appropriate scientific information about health issues of the elderly, this study was conducted to identify the problems of medical procedure from the viewpoint of the elderly referrals to healthcare centers of Hamedan during 2015.

2. Methods & Materials

The present research was a qualitative study using qualitative content analysis [6] that was conducted on the elderly referrals to Hamedan healthcare centers in 2015. The research participants were selected through an objective-oriented sampling with maximum diversity. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Hamedan University of Medical Sciences with the code

of ethics (UMSHA.REC.1394,2). Before the interview, the participants were informed about the project and the confidentiality of information. Interviews with the elderly were carried out in the education room of the healthcare centers with their consent and willingness.

Data were collected by the author through a semi-structured interview using the interview guide. All the interviews were conducted individually and face-to-face for approximately 30 to 40 minutes; all responses were literally taken down by another student. The inclusion criteria were elderly people aged between 60 and 75 years, taking medicine, and could participate in the study. Content analysis method was used to analyze the participants' responses. To do so, immediately after each interview, the word-by-word notes were examined more precisely by the research team and then recorded in the Word Software. The initial codes were allocated to the contents provided by the interviewees; in the next step, the similarities and differences were extracted from the concepts by constant comparison of the codes, so that a kind of merger was created on the same topics. In this way, the themes were extracted, and finally, the main topics of the study were obtained by reviewing the codes and themes.

3. Results

Of the 15 elderly participants, 6 were female and 9 were male. The use of diabetes medication was 26.5% higher in the participants than other medications. Three main concepts and 11 secondary concepts were extracted by

Table 1. Categorization of main and secondary contents from the medical procedure problems for the elderly

Main Concepts	Secondary Contents
Physician-related causes	High cost of visiting physicians
	Mistrust on physicians
	Inattention of physicians to the elderly
Medicine use problems	Side effects of medicines for the elderly
	Early running out of medicines
	Effectiveness of medicines
	Lack of alternative medicines for existing ones
	Multiple medicines to take
	Using others' medicines
Lack of medicines	Lack of medicine in some pharmacies
	Delivery of expired medicines to the elderly at some pharmacies

data analysis. Medical procedure problems for the elderly include three main themes, namely physician-related causes (costs of visiting physicians, distrust of physicians, inattention of physicians to the elderly), medicine use problems (side effects of medicines for the elderly, early running out of medicines, effectiveness of medicines, lack of alternative medicines for existing ones, multiple medicines to take, using the others' medicines), and the lack of medications (lack of medicine in some pharmacies, delivery of expired medicines to the elderly at some pharmacies) (Table 1).

One of the factors affecting the use of medicines by the elderly is the high cost of doctors' visits. The elderly participants stated that they are reluctant to take medications given the inappropriate treatments and wrong prescriptions by some physicians. Most elderly people pointed out that doctors do not care for the elderly when prescribing medications and explaining drugs. The elderly claimed that their medications would run out soon, and it will affect the use of medicines.

Majority of the elderly stated that imported medications are much better than domestic one as it has a positive impact on their health. Some elderly people reported that their medications cause complications, suggesting that it would be better to find substitutes for medications. They also mentioned that taking one or two drugs is better than taking multiple drugs. Elderly people said they used others' medicines when their medication was over or they did not have access to medications. The elderly participants explained that the medicines are sometimes unavailable in the pharmacies. They also pointed out that some pharmacies provide them expired medications thinking them to be old with no proper knowledge.

4. Conclusion

According to the research results, the elderly participants suggested several problems for medical procedure, among which the physician-related causes, medicine use problems, and lack of medicines were the most important ones. Also, the elderly people pointed out that the healthcare centers of Hamadan had some problems related to medical procedure. The results mainly emphasize the challenges of medical procedure facing the elderly; proper training and interventions after examining the problems could help the elderly people in this field. Considering the importance of studies in this field and the lack of such studies, it can be one of the research priorities on aging, especially in scientific centers. Also, authorities

can apply the research findings to appropriate planning and interventions for this group.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.