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An overview of otorhinolaryngeal problems in geriatrics in a tertiary hospital in an Indian state like Odisha: our experience

Krishna Chandra Mallik

PRM Medical College, Odisha, India

Background & Aim: In India the size of the elderly population, i.e. persons above the age of 60 years is fast growing, although it constitutes 7.4% of total population; in Odisha it is 8.1%. This may rise up to 10.4% by 2020 making 142 million people, 60 years and above. The problems of elderly are many. As the life expectancy increases the problems increase proportionately. For a developing country like India, there will be mounting pressures on various medical care providers as the number of elderly patients with Oto-rhino-laryngological problems seeking medical care will increase significantly, over the next several years. The increase of geriatric population, as well as their age-related problems, is of great concern for the society and for the governments all over the world and also in India. The main objectives were to overview and find the prevalence of Oto-rhino-laryngological problems in the geriatric population and to find out the areas of interventions in respect of ear nose and throat related problems.

Materials & Methods: A prospective study of geriatric patients was undertaken in ENT & HNS Department, SCB Medical College & Hospital, Cuttack, India, from November 2014 to August 2016.

Inclusion Criteria: The patients of age 60 yrs and above who attended ENT outpatient department were studied. Among 3563 patients studied, 363 patients were admitted. The patients were segregated according to sex (male/female), ages (60-64 yr group, 65-69 yr group, 70 yr & above), disease ratio, prevalence of diseases, associated co-morbidities, and socio-economic aspects.

Results: Total patients studied were 3563. The otological problems were being prevalent in geriatrics among study population (51.77%) in which presbycusis was the highest with 17.71% of total and 34.21% of otological problems. The problems related to nose were 13.03%, among which epistaxis was 4.98% of total and 37.60% of nasal problems. The neck and throat problems were 35.20%. The problems were more in males (63.65%) than in females (36.35%).

Conclusion: The hearing loss is the most prevalent diagnosis amongst all otologic problems and epistaxis amongst nasal symptoms. The emergence of head & neck cancers among the geriatric population is a great concern in a developing country like India.

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