

# Physical Health Status of the Elderly in Urban Community and Its Influencing Factors

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**ABSTRACT.** *With the prosperity of the country, the progress of society, the aging of the population process accelerated, the physical health of the elderly deserves double attention. In this paper, a random stratified sampling method was used to investigate and analyze the physical health status of the elderly aged 65 and over in a community of a city. The study found that the main factors that affect the physical health of the elderly are family conditions, personal ideology, economic income, and social security.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Urban community, Elderly, Physical health, Influencing factors*

## 1. Introduction

The age of 70, called the ancient rare, means that people of 70 years old were very rare in ancient times. In the early days of the founding of the people's Republic of China, the average life expectancy of Chinese residents was only 35 years old, but in 2019 it has increased to 77 years old [1]. Although our country is still in the developing country, it has already faced the population aging ahead of time. The first problem we should pay attention to is the physical health of the elderly.

Since the 1950s, 65 years of age has been used as the standard for research on the elderly population. According to a survey conducted by China Research Center for the aged, the elderly over 65 years old in China are living with diseases most of the time.

With the growth of age, the speed of human metabolism slows down, the body tissues begin to age, the organs appear atrophy, failure, various natural factors make the elderly become a high incidence of various chronic diseases. The majority of the elderly neglect the importance of physical exercise, resulting in fat accumulation, overweight, even obesity and other phenomena. This is extremely harmful to the physical health of the elderly, not only increasing the burden on the viscera and limbs, but also easily lead to many kinds of diseases, such as diabetes, hyperlipidemia, gallstones, arteriosclerosis, coronary heart disease and so on. In the aspect of respiratory and circulatory system, obesity is also easy to cause respiratory

acidosis, cor pulmonale, myocardial strain and so on. Excessive obesity in women can increase the risk of breast and endometrial hyperplasia, which can lead to breast and endometrial cancer. In addition, obesity causes a higher incidence rate of gout and proliferative arthritis. Some old people are easy to cause diseases such as cervical spondylosis, lumbar disc herniation and so on because of their working nature and living habits. Once found, they have become a serious disease, which increases the difficulty of cure and the risk of treatment.

At the same time, the current retirement age in China is 60 for men and 50 or 55 for women. In the face of sudden changes in social roles, physical maladjustment and social barriers have further increased the burden of physical and mental health of the elderly. In this stage, most of the cardiovascular diseases and mental diseases will be caused by excessive emotional fluctuations.

As mentioned above, it is inevitable to increase the burden of medical expenses for the elderly population. But based on the age of 65, most of the elderly were born in 1955 or before. Their sense of saving and being able to bear hardships has been deeply rooted in their hearts. Therefore, the first idea to face the pain is more patience than seeking help or medical treatment. According to the survey, the majority of the elderly people have malnutrition, which is also related to their habits formed from their early life.

## **2. Influencing Factors of Physical Health of the Elderly**

Because of the difference of individual conditions, the factors that affect the physical health of the elderly will vary from person to person, such as gender, age, family history, living environment, behavior habits, medical treatment, etc., but the overall can be summed up in the following four aspects.

### **(1) personal ideology**

The personal ideology is related to the educational level. According to the survey, the elderly with higher education have a strong sense of health, they will know about health care through news, books and other channels, and they are also very supportive of routine physical examination. However, some of the elderly with lower education level have a weak sense of self-care and are skeptical of scientific health management knowledge. Of course, some old people think that the former health is the current health. They can't accept the changes of their aging condition, the fact that they suffer from illness, or even the fact that they are not willing to go to a doctor. They delay for a long time and aggravate their illness.

### **(2) family situation**

In terms of family, the elderly in China live with their children, and their health status is managed by their children; for the elderly who are widowed and lonely, some will choose their own pension institutions, such as nursing homes, and some will be taken care of by the government.

Generally speaking, the elderly living with their children and grandchildren are

more likely to have a sense of belonging due to the influence of family affection, and their psychological state is easy to get pleasure and satisfaction, so that they are less likely to suffer from depression and illness caused by missing their children in terms of physical health. And family members can also play the role of care, it is easier to find out the abnormal physical condition of the elderly in time, so as to send them to the hospital in time; for the elderly who need to strictly follow the doctor's advice, they can also play a role of supervision. On the contrary, the majority of the elderly living alone are prone to depression, and they are unwilling to see a doctor or treat their pain in time. In addition, they are left unattended, or they faint at home and cannot call for help at the first time. Therefore, the influence of family conditions on the physical health of the elderly accounts for a large proportion, which should be paid attention to.

### (3) economic income

Economic income will affect the choice of medical treatment for the elderly[2]. Some people's economic income is relatively low, they do not want to go to medical institutions for examination due to some minor diseases, and often choose to take medicine at home. However, the elderly's physical condition is complex and changeable, and the exposed symptoms may be caused by many factors. If they can't follow the doctor's instructions and take medicine themselves, they are prone to medication disorders and even risks. Moreover, the elderly tend to ignore some seemingly "minor diseases" and pay no attention to them, but the complications caused by them are the bane of "minor diseases". The people with higher income don't have to delay their illness because of the lack of money. They can know their health status at any time, and they can also choose relatively better medical institutions and medical environment.

### (4) social security

Social security is both the foundation and the bottom line for the life of the elderly. Basic social security policies include endowment insurance, medical insurance, nursing security work, basic life, medical treatment, housing or other assistance, housing security system, elderly welfare system, etc.. However, for China with a large population base, the implementation of various policies is a huge and difficult project, which inevitably leads to omissions.

This year, there have been two cases of "old people are dead". A 63 year old in Shandong Province found "dead" due to pension interruption, and a 71 year old in Shanxi Province also failed to claim medical expenses due to "dead". The two cases were all caused by staff mistakes, which hurt the rights and interests of the old people. Therefore, people engaged in social security work for the elderly should take a warning, be cautious and responsible, and protect the life safety and physical health of the elderly.

Recently, China's State Medical Security Bureau issued the guiding opinions on expanding "Guidance on The Expansion of the Pilot Long Term Care Insurance System (Draft for Comment)" on the care of the disabled and semi disabled elderly with the accelerated aging process. We hope to improve the old-age security system

through the long-term care insurance system, strengthen the attention to the physical health status of the elderly, and realize the thorough “care for the elderly” and “care for the sick” from various aspects.

### **3. Conclusion**

To sum up, this paper believes that the government should strengthen the implementation and supervision of the elderly medical care and pension policies, and the urban communities should actively respond, earnestly implement and publicize the elderly disease care knowledge. In this way, the elderly can improve their self-health awareness of physical fitness and timely medical treatment. At the same time, the strong support and cooperation of the family can also improve the health status of the elderly.

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