Elderly Population In Bangladesh: Coping With Society In Transition

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Background

• Bangladesh has a long tradition of looking after the elderly by offspring or family
• Rapid socio-economic transformations, changing social and religious values have broken down the traditional extended family system
• Many elderly people now stay in old-homes, mainly based in Dhaka, run by NGO or as charity.
Objective:

To explore
- the scenario of elderly in Bangladesh
- reasons for living in old-home
- How do they cope with new environment and their satisfaction about old-home

To sensitize
- the policy makers for designing and implementing appropriate programs for elderly in Bangladesh
Methods:

• Elderly (60+ yrs) living in two old-homes (n = 56) in Dhaka was interviewed.
• Reasons for staying in home and satisfaction etc. along with socio-demographic information were collected.
Results:

• Almost all came from better-off family, 47% male and 53% female. 68% of men and 36% women were retired mid level or high official. Reasons for coming to elderly home were problem with kin (63%) or with children (9%), children living in abroad (5%), no one to take care at home (67%), burden in the family (24%), properties occupied by others (27%). Children or relatives visit them (87%). 92% are satisfied with overall management of old-home
Results

Sociodemographic status

- Male: Female 47:53
- Mean age (range) 66.5 yrs (57-76 yrs)
- Religion
  - Muslim 96 %
  - Hindu 4 %
- Education (Graduate or more) 88%
- Unmarried 4%
- Monthly income (range) USD$ 2,000- 14,000
Reason for living at old home (one or more answer)

- No one to take care: 67%
- Problem with family members or kin: 63%
- Burden in the family: 24%
- Properties occupied by others: 27%
- Others: 5%
Satisfaction with the home

- Satisfied with service 92%
- Satisfied with health facilities 72%
- Feel independent 80%
- Doesn’t bother other people 99%
- Children/relative visit them 87%
Conclusion:

• Elderly people living in old-homes are mainly from better-off urban middle-class and rich family doesn’t reflect the actual situation of elderly people in the society.
• The old-home is a new idea and one solution of the elderly in a society in transition.
• It is an indication of the growing rift between the generations.