

Home / India News / About 75 million elderly in India suffer from some chronic disease: Health ministry survey

INDIA NEWS

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About 40% have some form of disability, and as high as 20% are suffering from mental health issues, says the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India released on Wednesday



By [Rhythm Kaul](#) | Hindustan Times, New Delhi

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Representational Image.(HT file photo)

About 75 million elderly persons in [India](#), or one in two people above 60 years of age, suffer from some chronic disease, shows the first part of the world's largest study on the elderly -- The Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI)-- released on Wednesday.

About 40% have some form of disability, and as high as 20% are suffering from mental health issues. Also, 27% of this population group has multi-morbidities, which translates to roughly 35 million people.

“About 45 million have cardiovascular disease and hypertension and about 20 million suffer from diabetes, and 24% of the elderly has difficulty in performing daily functions such as walking, eating, toilet etc; according to this survey,” said KS James, director, The International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, which is the nodal institution for implementing the survey.

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“Even if we assume 90% of these people are taken care of at home, there is still 10% that would require professional help. Imagine the employment opportunities that will be generated in future and the number of people who would require training to take care of the elderly in our country,” said James.

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The study was commissioned by the Union ministry of health and family welfare in 2016, to track ageing patterns and diseases affecting India's 103 million people over 60 years of age. The other institutes that collaborated for the survey include the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and the University of Southern California.

With people living longer, the global share of older people aged 60 years and above increased from 9.2% in 1990 to 11.7% in 2013 and is expected to reach 21.1% by 2050.

With 65% of India's population under 35 years of age when the study was commissioned, there are expected to be 350 million people above 60 years by 2050, which is why the government focused on documenting the problems faced by the elderly in our country and how their problems could be addressed.

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"From 9% in 2011, the 60 plus population in the country is likely to go up to 20% in 2050. A common plan will be created for the care of elderly in the country using the findings of the LASI study for implementation in future," said Vandana Gurnani, mission director, National Health Mission.

The first wave of LASI covered a panel sample of 72,250 individuals age 45 years and above, including 31,464 people above 60 and 6,749 oldest-old persons aged 75 and above.

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