



Between Desire and Distaste: Perception of Persons near and above Retirement Age in South Western, Nigeria towards Old People's Homes

Badmus O. O², Esan O. T¹, Badmus H. D³, Arije O. O⁴

¹Department of Community Health, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

²Rosewood Hospitals and Diagnostic Center Limited, No 3, Oduduwa Crescent, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

³Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and Traumatologist, Cedarcrest Hospitals, No. 25, Harold Shodipo Street, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

⁴Adjunct Research Fellow, Institute of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Due to urbanization, modernization and financial constraints, there has been older people abuse and neglect. Study assessed the level of awareness about old peoples' homes, willingness to retire therein and factors influencing such among persons near and above retirement age.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in Ikeja and Lagos Mainland Local government areas (LGA), Lagos state, Nigeria among 385 people aged ≥ 50 years selected via a multi-stage sampling technique. Data collection tool was a pre-tested semi-structured interviewer administered questionnaire and SPSS version 17.0 soft-ware was used for data analysis with level of statistical significance set at p-value < 0.05

Results: There was high level of awareness (68.1%) and willingness to retire into old peoples' homes (69.9%) by the respondents. Participation in religious activities alone was significantly associated with both awareness ($p < 0.001$) and willingness to retire therein ($p < 0.001$). Neither sex nor age of respondents significantly predicted willingness to retire into old people's homes. Respondents with perception of old age as a period of economic insecurity ($p = 0.47$), loneliness ($p = 0.08$), with old people's home as places meant for the sick ($p = 0.32$) were less likely to retire into old people's homes than those who perceived it as a period of relaxation ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: There's a fairly high level of awareness about old people's homes and willingness to retire into same in order to receive better care and enjoy companionship among respondents in the LGA studied. . However, there's need for proper stakeholder engagement and improved strategies to increase demand for old people's homes.

Correspondence to:

Esan Oluwaseun Taiwo
Department of Community Health, Faculty of Clinical Sciences,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.
Phone number: +2348037250980
E-mail: seunkayo@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

An ageing population is one in which there is an increase in the proportion of people aged 60 years and above who are also known as the elderly or seniors citizens. This is now recognized as a global issue of increasing importance as there is a rapid growth in the number of older people worldwide which has created an unprecedented global demographic revolution.¹ According to WHO, from 2000 to 2050, the world's population aged 60 and over will more than triple from 600 million to 2

billion and most of this increase is occurring in less developed countries, where the number of older people will rise from 400 million in 2000 to 1.7 billion by 2050.² United Nations 2005 population profile also shows that there were 5 million Nigerians aged 60 years and above in 2005 and proposed that this number will continue to increase.³ They projected that by year 2025, about 6% of Nigerians will be aged 60 years and above.³

In traditional Nigerian society, the care and support of elderly persons were provided by the family

members, especially the wives, sons, daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law.¹ This care giving was backed not simply by the emotional bonds of relationship emerging out of blood relationship or marital relationship but by the force of pervasive influence of traditional values, norms, and behavior which were not simply practiced as a matter of routine but also deified.² However, this traditional bond between the elderly and the younger members of the family is gradually becoming weak in Nigeria.

The first major reasons are the processes of modernization, urbanization, industrialization and the attendant migration of youths from rural to urban areas. These have greatly undermined the position of the elderly in contemporary Nigerian society.⁴ Similarly, many women are taking up paid employment and this has led to a decrease in the availability of primary caregivers for the elderly and increased reports of neglect and abuse. With the growing economic problems in the country coupled with high unemployment rates, many children do not have the needed finance to take care of their aged parents.

Increase in life expectancy due to advancement in the field of medicine has brought about more elderly people and the trend will continue.³ This Demographic situation, unique to our time, has profound significance for the planning and delivery of health, social services and programs for the elderly. This is because the process of ageing is often compounded with other associated factors such as; deteriorating physical health, poor nutrition, bereavement, social isolation. This being the case, the demand for health services by the elderly will increase and pension spending will rise.⁵ There will also be more pressure on caregivers, country's resources and budgets. Demographic and socio-economic changes have also threatened the well-being of the elderly women occasioned by their inferior social position.⁶

In Nigeria, the government provides for the elderly in the pension scheme (though this has been grossly inadequate in that it served only a small proportion

of the elderly persons as it is only for those who had been engaged in public service.⁵ There are also old people's homes run by government and religious bodies, as well as geriatric centers. These old people's homes, sometimes called retirement homes or nursing homes are multi-residence housing facilities intended for senior citizens with facilities for meals, gatherings, recreational activities and some form of health or hospice care. With these specialized facilities, the burden of care and support for the elderly is taken off the families and the elderly can have improved quality of life. However, the rate of utilization of these facilities is rather low for several reasons yet to be published in literature. Hence, this study assessed the level of awareness of residents of Lagos State within the age of retirement about old people's homes, determined their willingness to retire into such homes and identified the factors predicting retirement into old people's homes among the population studied.

METHODOLOGY

Study Location and Sample

The study was a community-based and descriptive cross-sectional in design conducted in Lagos state, a highly commercial and industrialized city in Nigeria. Lagos state is peculiar for having its residents hailing from various ethnic groups in the country. Two local government areas (LGA) in the state, Ikeja and Lagos Mainland were selected purposively to represent locations with and without an old people's home in situ respectively. A total of 385 adult men and women aged ≥ 50 years were studied as these are close to the retirement age of ≥ 60 years old in Nigeria. They were selected via a multi-stage sampling technique which involved the selection of the wards and then the streets per wards in both LGAs through simple random sampling techniques. Then houses on the streets were selected through a systematic random sampling technique and finally an eligible respondent per household in each house was selected through balloting. Eligibility criteria were

being within the study age bracket and willingness to participate in the study.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data was collected using a semi-structured interviewer-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested in Ikorodu LGA of Lagos State. Outcome measures were 'awareness about old people's homes' and 'willingness to retire into old people's homes'. Awareness about old people's homes was determined based on positive response to the questions; 'do you know what is an old people's home?', 'do you know of any old people's home?', and 'do you know of anyone who lives in an old people's home?' The maximum obtainable score was 3. Scoring 2 or more was defined as having good awareness while scoring below 2 was defined as having poor awareness. Willingness to retire was assessed using a single dichotomous variable by asking if respondent was willing or not willing to retire in an old people's home. Data were cleaned and analyzed using the SPSS version 17 statistical software. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools of the Chi-square statistical tests were used to test associations between dependent and independent variables. Multi-variate analysis was done to determine factors predicting willingness to retire into old people's homes. Level of statistical significance was set at p -value <0.05 . Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research and Ethics Committee of the Institute of Public Health, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Informed consent was also obtained from the respondents.

Results

Three hundred and eighty-five (385) individuals responded to the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 100%. These comprised of 166 (43.1%) males and 219 (56.9%) females. Their mean age was 60.2 ± 7.9 years standard deviation (SD) with ages ranging from 50 to 89 years. A higher proportion of them were from the Yoruba tribe, 166 (43.1%).

About 343 (80%) had formal education with 77 (20%) having attained higher level of education. Only 14 (3.6%) of them were never married. Of these respondents, 195 (50.9%) were resident in Yaba while the remaining 190 (49.3%) were resident in Ikeja. For most of the respondents, 181 (47.0%), their main sources of income was personal business. A higher proportion of the respondents 335 (89.1%) lived with family while the others lived alone. However, 216 (65.5%) of those who lived with their family had their family type as nuclear.

Awareness about old people's homes

The mean score on level of awareness was 2.1 ± 0.9 . About 262 (69.9%) had good awareness about old people's homes. Among these, 135 (51.4%) had religious organizations as their source of information amidst other sources like family members, media, family doctors and neighbors. Being aged ≥ 65 or not was not statistically significantly associated with level of awareness about old people's homes, ($p=0.753$). Neither was sex of the respondents, ($p=0.664$). Only perceived high level of participation of respondents in religious activities was statistically significantly associated with awareness about old people's homes, ($p<0.001$). There was no statistically significant association between respondents residing in Ikeja or Lagos Mainland LGA and their ability to locate an old people's home (Table I).

Willingness to retire into old people's homes

Findings showed that 269 (69.9%) of respondents were willing to retire into old people's homes. Few of the reasons given for this were the desire to be cared for in a better way 198 (51.4%), avoidance of being a burden to their family 100 (26.0%), and the desire for companionship 61 (15.8%). Of the respondents not willing to retire into old people's homes, 71 (18.4%) attributed it to the feeling of abandonment if they do and 45 (11.7%) of them perceived old people's homes as expensive. A few, 36 (9.4%) believed retiring into old people's homes is against the Nigerian culture (Table II).

Table I: Socio-demographic factors associated with respondent's level of awareness of Old peoples' homes

Variables	Level of Awareness (n= 385)		Test statistic (χ^2)	Degree of freedom (df)	P-value
	Poor Awareness	Good Awareness			
Age Group (in years)					
≤65	94 (31.5)	200 (68.5)	0.0992	1	0.753
>65	29 (33.3)	58 (66.7)			
Gender					
Male	55 (33.1)	111 (66.9)	0.1883	1	0.664
Female	68 (31.1)	151 (68.9)			
Participation in Religious Activities					
Yes	6 (2.6)	225 (97.4)	228.8245	1	<0.001
No	117 (75.9)	37 (24.0)			
Education					
No Formal Education	15 (35.7)	27 (64.3)			
Primary	39 (35.5)	71 (64.6)	1.537	3	0.674
Secondary	47 (30.1)	109 (69.9)			
Higher Education	22 (28.6)	55 (71.4)			
Residence					
Yaba	65 (33.3)	130 (66.7)	0.3488	1	0.555
Ikeja	58 (30.5)	132 (69.5)			
Ethnicity					
Hausa	5 (20.0)	20 (80.0)			
Igbo	33 (30.8)	74 (69.2)	2.8584	3	0.414
Yoruba	59 (35.5)	107 (64.5)			
Others	26 (29.9)	61 (70.1)			
Living arrangement					
Living alone	8 (19.5)	33(80.5)	2.323	1	0.127
Living with family	104(31.0)	231(69.0)			
Family type					
Nuclear	65(30.1)	151(69.9)	0.586	1	0.444
Extended	39(34.2)	75(65.8)			

The factors associated with willingness to retire into old people's home include good awareness about such homes ($p<0.001$); perception of old age itself as a period of loneliness ($p<0.001$) and preference for the company of other relatives, neighbor or friends ($p<0.001$). There was also a significantly high

Table II: Willingness of the respondents to retire to old peoples' homes

Variable	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage
Willingness to retire to old people's homes		
Willing	269	69.9%
Not willing	116	30.1%
Perception of old age as		
Period of relation	237	61.6%
Period of dependency	67	17.4%
Period of loneliness	85	21.0%
Reasons for willing to retire to old people's homes		
Better care	198	51.4%
Avoid family conflict	50	13.0%
Not be a burden on family	50	13.0%
Spouse's ill health/disability	32	8.3%
Companionship	61	15.8%
Basic needs at reasonable cost	44	11.4%
Reasons for not willing to retire to old people's homes		
Not Nigerian culture	36	9.4%
Cost	45	11.7%
Isolation	74	19.2%
Inadequate care	41	10.6%
Abandonment	71	18.4%

Table III : Factors associated with the willingness to retire to old people's homes

	Would you retire to an old people's home? (n=385)		Chi sq	Df	p-value		
	Yes Freq	No %					
Awareness of old people's home							
Poor awareness	7	5.7	116	94.3	353.64	1	<0.001
Good awareness	262	100.0	0	0.0			
Feelings towards old age							
Period of relaxation	127	53.6	110	46.4	77.75	1	<0.001
Period of dependency	43	64.2	24	35.8	1.25	1	0.264
period of economic insecurity	43	64.2	24	35.8	125	1	0.264
period of loneliness	80	94.1	5	5.9	30.47	1	<0.001
Do you play any role in your religious organization							
Yes	231	100.0	0	0.0	249.03	1	<0.001
No	38	24.7	116	75.3			
Whose company do you prefer							
Family member	0	0.0	116	100.0			
Relatives	198	100.0	0	0.0	385.00	1	<0.001
Neighbors/friends	71	100.0	0	0.0			
Do you think old people's home take the burden of caring for the elderly away from the younger family members							
Yes	198	63.1	116	36.9	37.54	1	<0.001
No	71	100.0	0	0.0			
Do you think old people's homes are meant for the sick/mentally ill/destitute/childless adults							
Yes	25	67.6	12	32.4	0.10	1	0.748
No	244	70.1	104	29.9			

level of willingness to retire into old people's homes amongst individuals who were interested in having conversations with others $p < 0.001$ and amongst those who enjoyed the company of relatives ($P < 0.001$). However, none of age, sex, marital status, ethnicity, completed level of education, proximity of their residence to an old people's home, neither their type of living arrangement nor family type was statistically significantly associated with willingness to retire into such homes (Table III).

Table IV: Predicting factors for willingness to retire to old people's homes

Variables	OR	SE	Z	p - value	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Sex						
Male	1					
Female	1.13	0.32	0.43	0.66	0.65	1.99
Age						
≤65 years	1					
>65 years	0.83	0.30	-0.53	0.60	0.41	1.66
Marital Status						
Never married	1					
Currently married	0.17	0.16	-1.91	0.06	0.03	1.04
Widow/widower	0.32	0.31	-1.19	0.23	0.05	2.09
Divorced/separated	0.28	0.31	-1.16	0.25	0.03	2.43
Education						
No formal education	1					
Primary	2.55	1.26	1.90	0.06	0.97	6.70
Secondary	1.89	0.91	1.32	0.19	0.73	4.86
Higher education	1.64	0.88	0.92	0.36	0.57	4.68
Ethnicity						
Hausa						
Igbo	0.65	0.42	-0.67	0.51	0.18	2.32
Yoruba	0.47	0.30	-1.17	0.24	0.13	1.66
Others	0.44	0.29	-1.22	0.22	0.12	1.63
Feelings towards old age						
Period of relaxation	0.06	0.03	5.86	0.00	0.03	0.16
Period of dependency	0.26	0.49	0.71	0.48	0.01	10.30
period of economic insecurity	3.81	6.98	0.73	0.47	0.11	137.95
period of loneliness	2.79	1.62	1.77	0.08	0.89	8.73
Homes are meant for the sick						
No	1					
Yes	1.62	0.79	0.99	0.32	0.62	4.20
Constant	51.85	56.00	3.66	0.00	6.24	430.69

Predictors of willingness to retire into old people's homes

Neither sex nor age of respondents significantly predicted willingness to retire into old people's homes. Respondents that were older than 65 years old had 17% lesser odds of being willing to retire into old people's homes compared with those who

were younger than 65 years. Females had about 13% more odds than males. The lower the level of education, the more likely that such a person would retire to an old people's home though this was also not statistically significant. Respondents who perceived that old age is a period of economic insecurity, ($p=0.47$) and loneliness ($p=0.08$), with the old people's home as places meant for the sick, ($p=0.32$) were less likely to retire into old people's homes than those who perceived old age as a period of relaxation, ($p < 0.001$) (Table IV).

DISCUSSION

The perception of Nigerians within the age of retirement in the urban city of Lagos towards retiring into old people's homes was studied, seeking their level of awareness, acceptance and willingness to utilize such facilities in Nigeria, and determining the factors responsible for their perception towards old people's homes.

Almost all the respondents who participated in this study, 339 (88.1%) knew what an old people's home is. This group also knew of someone living in an old people's home. However, only 269 (69.9%) knew where to find one. This is not good enough as not knowing where to locate an old people's home already makes retiring into one an uphill task. It is therefore, important for managers or owners of old people's homes including the government to engage in more awareness creation of what an old people's home is and where to find one if need be. The high level of awareness about old people's homes was found to be statistically significantly associated only with participation of respondents in religious activities. This corroborated the findings of Aruna et al in 2011⁷ on Elderly living in Old age home and within family set-up. They reported that 33.3% of the respondents within family set-up reported participation in religious activities. This shows the relevance of religious institutions in promoting the health of the elderly. Hence it will be beneficial if government and all stakeholders partner with these

religious institutions in meeting the needs of the elderly in the population. Proximity to a local government area (LGA) with an old people's home situated in it was not statistically significantly associated with awareness about old people's homes or the ability to locate one. This finding strongly supports that there is inadequate demand creation by even the few existing old people's homes. This also calls for a more strategic means of creating awareness for the utilization of these homes for those in need of them. This may entail targeted awareness creation at the elderly population in the country.

About three-quarters of the respondents studied were willing to retire into old people's homes. This is an interesting finding and it shows that the Nigerian society has evolved and has come to terms with the demands of the present times and left behind the strong cultural beliefs that preached against the use of old people's homes. However, this finding may be so because it was conducted in an urban society such as Lagos. Hence there is the need to conduct a nationwide study that will be more geographically representative of the situation in the country. Be that as it may, the need for such old people's homes will be more daunting in societies like Lagos where this study was done.

Everyone is a social being including the senior citizens. The need for companionship and desire to be cared for in a better way were some of the reasons for the willingness to retire into old people's homes. This is in keeping with the study by Buzgova et al in 2011 which reported that residents were happy with the care they received in nursing homes, in terms of their personal hygiene, meals, help with toileting and dressing.⁸ Choi et al found out that some residents preferred being in nursing homes rather than where they had lived previously. This is because they had lived alone without much human contact and experienced situations where they had almost died alone as a result of falls and other health crises. Other studies had found that daily interactions with

other people contributed to the individual development of residents in nursing homes. Hence, increased utilization of old people's homes can reduce the incidence of loneliness and its sequelae among the elderly. This further potentiates the need for more awareness creation on the benefits of living in an old people's home.

On the other hand, 116 (30.1%) of the respondents were not willing to retire to old people's homes. For 36 (9.4%) of these ones, retiring into old people's homes is not part of the Nigerian culture. This was also reported by Okoye et al in 2013² where they found that the unique cultural characteristics in Nigeria reject institutionalization. Retiring to old people's home studied by Teeri et al in 2006⁹ reported that some residents in Nursing homes felt that they had long days and were bored,⁹ and as a result these residents were often frustrated and disengaged. In another study carried out by Ransom in 2008, they stated that the loss of independence of elderly residents not only meant loss of freedom, but also resulted in a sense of not being useful anymore.¹⁰ This therefore means that it is not just about making people retire to old people's homes but making them retire into a better option. Governments and owners of the old people's homes must be made responsible for providing better care for these senior citizens as everyone hopes to become one in the nearest future.

CONCLUSION

There was good level of awareness about old people's homes as well as willingness to retire into one. Residential proximity of respondents to one was not associated with this willingness but rather active participation in religious activities by the respondents. The desire to receive better care and desire for companionship were the main reasons given for willingness to retire into an old people's home amongst others. The perception of old age as a period of relaxation could significantly predict willingness to retire into an old people's home.

Findings revealed the need of adequate stakeholder engagement in increasing awareness about old people's homes and willingness to retire therein by persons near retirement age. The need for strategies to improve demand creation for old people's homes as well as ensuring it offers better care for the elderly were reiterated in the findings from this study. A focus on demand creation for available old people's homes and proper monitoring to ensure quality care is provided in these homes will overall strengthen the health systems towards the care of the elderly population.

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