Does Growing Non-Communicable Diseases among Older Persons make them more vulnerable? : A Case of India

Panel 4.4: Health and Targeted Populations

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are major contributing factors to the disease burden in the world as well as in India. With increasing proportion of older persons in India, it is worth studying the issues related to NCDs among older adults. Therefore, an attempt has been made to see the prevalence of NCDs among older persons and its treatment seeking behavior. The association between the NCDs and its effect on the overall wellbeing of older persons will also be looked at. Data is derived from “Building Knowledge Base of Population Ageing Survey” which was conducted in 2011 in seven states of India. Six chronic but NCDs are used, namely Arthritis, Hypertension, Cataract, Diabetes, Asthma and Heart diseases to understand the issues related to NCDs. Preliminary analysis shows that orthopedic/musculoskeletal ailments involving arthritis, rheumatism and osteoarthritis are the most common types of ailment followed by hypertension. Two-thirds of the elderly reported suffering from at least one chronic ailment. Most chronic illnesses received some form of treatment and mainly depended on public health facilities. It depicts that the burden of disease is more among the elderly and it is directly affecting the overall wellbeing of older persons.