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Dementia and aging in Vietnam

Nguyen Thi Phuong Dung

Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Debrecen, Hungary

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Background

The aging rate of the Vietnamese population is one of the most elevated worldwide. Dementia is identified as one of the major disturbances to healthy aging and a leading cause of death in Vietnam. In spite of the importance of dementia research for policy making and healthcare development, there is a scarcity in study on epidemiological profile of dementia in Vietnam.

Objectives

This study aims to review the studies on dementia in Vietnam in terms of (1) dementia prevalence, (2) the associated factors and (3) future directions for further assessments and research.

Methods

International and national databases and journals were accessed to extract studies published between 2000 - 2024 regarding dementia prevalence assessment in Vietnam, 22 articles were

filtered to be the sample for analysis. The pooled prevalence of dementia among elderly aged 60 and above was estimated using a random-effects model (REM).

Result

The pooled prevalence of dementia was estimated to be 20% with a 95% CI (15% - 26%). Results from individual research fluctuated from 7% to 46%. The majority of studies were single-phased with MMSE and DSM-5 used main assessments tools. All studies used in analysis were cross-sectional studies. The risk of dementia increases with age, being female, unavailability of physical and social activities, low education level and stroke history. Culturally, dementia is associated with the natural course of aging and not a health priority. Professional diagnosis and treatment is uncommon, mainly in domestic settings with family members as caregivers, the understanding of caregivers about dementia and necessary medical protocols was insignificant.

Conclusions

Considering the complexity of culture and demographic characteristics, there is an urgent call in fostering studies for sufficient understanding for policy making and research strategies. Potential improvements in dementia research in Vietnam lie in several areas: enhancing epidemiological research methods, conducting longitudinal studies; cultivating universal adaptation of assessment tools and scales; creating national databases for literature review and international collaboration.

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