

Common Presenting Health Problems of Adult in Slum Dwellers of Chattogram City

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Abstract

Background: The rapid growth of urbanization in Bangladesh has created some adverse effects on the overall urban environmental health of the cities. Among all, mass poverty, expansion of poor neighborhood, inadequate supply of urban services such as water, sanitation, waste disposal etc. are mostly responsible for health risks of urban people particularly in low socio-economic condition. A host of environmental and social problems beset the port city of Chattogram due to overcrowding of slums, which is largely blamed on unplanned urbanization. More than four hundred slums accommodating about 1 million of people are scattered across the city. Majority of these slums are situated on the Ice Factory road, along the railway tracks under Dewanhat Bridge, Sholosohor, Pahartali, Chittagong Railway Station, and Lalkhan Bazar Motijhornaarea. The purpose of the study was to assess the pattern of common health problems of the adult members of the slum dwellers of Chattogram city.

Materials and methods: A descriptive type of cross-sectional study was conducted from September to October 2022, using a sample of 321 respondents living in urban slums. Data was collected by face to face interview using a pretested mixed type of questionnaire. After collection, data was analyzed and results were presented as tables and figures.

Results: Out of a total of 1492 family members of 321 families, there were 744 male and 748 female individuals. The most common presenting health problems among the adult respondents were Back pain and Generalized body-ache (24%), followed by Hypertension (16%), Headache (14%), Generalized Weakness (10%), Diabetes (8%), Asthma (8%), Cough (6%), Fever (5%), Chest Pain (4%), Anaemia (4%).

Conclusion: The study concludes that physical structure of the neighborhood, and the physical and mental sufferings of its inhabitants are interdependent. To reduce the sufferings of inhabitants, their health hazards can be reduced with the combined efforts of the Government and the NGOs and the local people as well. Most of the slum dwellers are dependent on the pharmacy for their health problems. They are reluctant to take government health care facilities. Measures should be taken to make these facilities easily available to them.

Key words: Health problem; Slum dweller; Urbanization.

INTRODUCTION

With the population explosion, rapid urbanization, and industrialization the urban environmental quality is deteriorating more and more. This situation has imposed different types of risk factors on human health as the environment more strongly affects people's health than any other determinants. The World Health Organization estimated that about a quarter of the diseases facing mankind today occur due to prolonged exposure to environmental pollution. Since environmental pollution

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predominantly occurs in the urban areas of the developing countries, urban people are at the center of different environment-induced diseases.¹ Hence, the issue of understanding and managing urban environmental health has become a major concern for many of the developing countries like Bangladesh.

Urbanization is occurring rapidly in Bangladesh, accompanied by the proliferation of slum settlements. Bangladesh being a heavily overpopulated country with a weak economy, a huge portion of the population resides in the slum areas. These areas are densely populated, with poor amount of hygiene and health solutions. This leads to a series of socio-economic and public health problems. Superstitions and lack of women empowerment often aggravate these problems. Family planning is often considered a taboo, as a result maternal & child health are a matter of concern as well.² All these factors also contribute to the poor mental health of the children and young-adults. This result, causes drug abuse, which leads to more socio-economic problems. It's a vicious cycle that needs thorough attention and needs to be put under proper scrutinization.

Urbanization has historically been presumed to lead to mortality reduction in prosperous countries but not in developing countries like Bangladesh.² People living in unhygienic environments as indicated by poor drainage systems, inadequate or non-existent sanitation, and piles of uncollected garbage cause higher levels of health problems.

Assessment of health status and health problems is the first requisite for any planned effort to develop health care services rendered towards the community. Therefore this study was conducted to find out the prevalence of common health problems faced by the slum dwellers of Chittagong.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is descriptive type of cross-sectional study was conducted during the period from September to November 2022 at city of Chattogram. Total 321 respondents were enrolled in this study. Sampling technique was purposive. Data collecting instruments was pre-tested mixed type of questionnaire. Method of data collection Face-to-face interview. Data management Managed manually.

RESULTS

A total of 321 families were studied. There were 1492 family members. So, family size is 4.65. Out of family heads, 153 (24%) people had back pain and generalized body ache, 104 (16%) people had hypertension, 95 (14%) people had headache, 64 (10%) people had generalized weakness, 54 (8%) people had diabetes. 49 (8%) people had asthma, 37 (6%) people had cough, 31 (5%) people had fever, 27 (4%) people had chest pain and 23 (4%) people were anaemic.

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Table I Gender of the respondent

Gender □	Frequency □	Percentage (%)
Male □	744 □	(49.86%)
Female □	748 □	(50.13%)
Total □	1492 □	(100%)

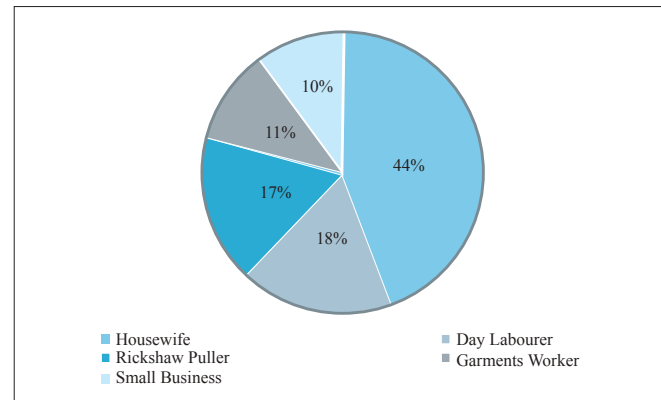


Figure 1 Occupations of the respondents

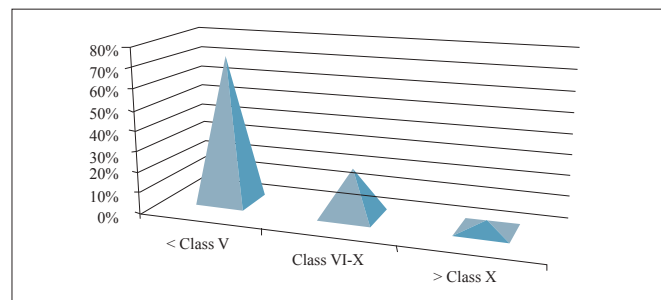


Figure 2 Educational Status of the respondents

TABLE II Personal habits of respondents

Personal habits □	Frequency □	Percentage
Cigarette □	235 □	25%
Betel Leaf □	295 □	31%
Tobacco Leaf/Jorda □	160 □	17%
Alcohol/Drug □	8 □	01%
No personal Habit □	249 □	26%

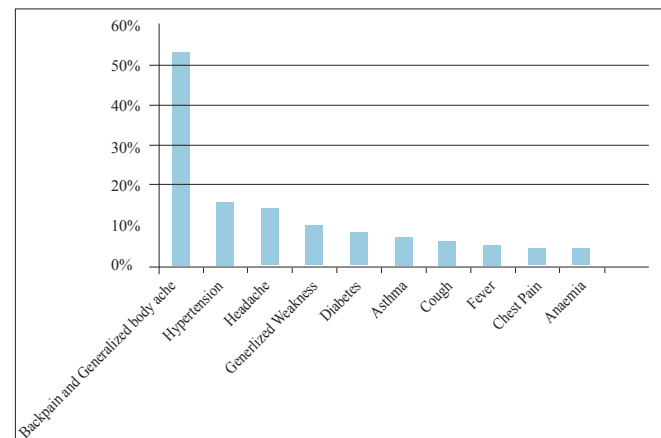


Figure 3 Top 10 Presenting Health Problems of Respondents

DISCUSSION

A descriptive type of cross-sectional study was conducted on “Common presenting health problems” among the residents of slum dwellers of Chattogram city slum. Out of 1492 family members of 321 families, there were 744 male and 748 female individuals. The most common presenting health problem among the respondents was back pain and generalized body ache (24%) which is higher than data of 7.8% according to 2016 Bangladesh J. Sci.³ This could be due to the fact that 18% of total respondents were day laborer. According to the study 16% of total respondents have hypertension which is similar to another study by DrKausar⁴ However, among all respondents 8% was diabetic while according to 2016 Bangladesh J. Sci.³ 5% people were diabetic. It indicates the change of lifestyle as the number of diabetic people have been increased. According to data of 2016 Bangladesh J. Sci.³ 9% people had headache while in our study it was much higher (14%), According to Bangladesh J. Sci.³ 5% had asthma which has been decreased to 3.7% and 5% had fever which has been increased to 26%. Only 6% people had cough according to data of 2019 Quest Journal while in our study it was 60% which indicates the proliferation of respiratory illness.⁵ Slums of Bangladesh will continue to grow, and with them the health problems of their inhabitants. Investment and planning by policy makers will be needed to remedy these problems. Existing solutions, such as those already trialed by NGOs, can be put into practice through coordination between various ministries, NGOs and the private organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

From the observations, opinion of the dwellers, NGO, local Govt. workers, and previous data, it is clear that the slum dwellers are not facilitated of important fundamental rights like housing and health facilities, job opportunities, sanitation facilities, education etc. Among them Back pain and Generalized body ache, Hypertension, Headache, Generalized Weakness, Diabetes, Asthma, Cough, Fever, Chest Pain, Anemia was the most common health problems. Most of the respondents had back pain and generalized body ache Headache, weakness and anemia because of most of them were garments workers and rickshaw puller and lack of iron rich food in their diet. Government should take initial steps to improve the living condition of slum dwellers, utility service facilities, education facilities, health facilities etc. Effective measures are needed to increase both demand and supply of services and thereby the equilibrium use of health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should take initial steps to improve the living condition of slum dwellers, utility service facilities, education facilities, health facilities etc.
- Special orientation programme should be taken by the government and NGOs to increase awareness of people about the harmful effects of smoking, drinking, chewing betel leaf and drug abuse.
- Anti-helminthic drugs and Vitamin A capsules should be provided to the children of slum areas.

DISCLOSURE

All the authors declared no conflict of interest.

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