

## Preface

The elderly (people above the age of 60 years) comprise 7.7 percent of India's total population, making health care available and accessible to them is one of the health priorities of the country. Service provision requires generation of an evidence base; therefore a multicentric study was planned to provide some leads in this important health area in 2002-03 with technical support from the WHO India Country Office. Ten sites were chosen across the country with a view to provide regional representation in the data generated. Medical colleges in these sites were given the responsibility to gather information based on a standard proforma developed for this purpose. Information was collected on demographic variables, current health problems and complaints, social interaction, health care expectations, with examination by a physician, and laboratory investigations.

This report brings together the results of this multicentric study undertaken for assessing the health problems and felt needs of the elderly. This study was the first of its kind in scope and coverage though some centres were unable to collect information on some of the desired variables. The data presented in this report is only indicative of the health status and expectations of the geriatric population, however it cannot be extrapolated to the entire country. This exercise however, provides directions for planning programmes for the health care of the elderly and for future research in this significant public health field. A model for health care delivery is also proposed at the end of the report.

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conduct of the study, as well as the compilation of the findings is also duly acknowledged. It is hoped that this report, with its limitations, will serve the purpose of bringing into focus the health care issues among the elderly, and help in the planning of health care services for this age group.

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