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**Current Research areas:**

- Ageing & Disability: Functional decline and cognition
- Urbanization, transition and Health
- Social epidemiology of chronic illnesses

**Ageing & Disability: Functional decline, cognition, social support**

The fundamental aim of the research is to improve quality of life of elderly by preventing disability. We are interested to know how older adults become disabled (longitudinal data on functional decline) and can it be prevented and what changes are required in their immediate environment to reduce impact of disability. Research facilitated development of a reliable and valid tool to assess and record changes in the functional ability systematically. Basic and instrumental activities of daily living (walking, climbing, squatting, self care, domestic work, financial management etc) are measured using a tool called as Pune-FAAT (AGG 58; 2014). A cohort of older adults from the city of Pune is assessed at the baseline in 2010-11, and again in 2014-15. Hospitalization, chronic illness are identified as major predictors of disability (AGG 69; 2017). Experience of memory loss and feeling of loneliness were major consequences of functional decline. Our research also focuses on the care networks and formal and informal social support systems for older adults' especially disabled and frail elderly. Information of more than 1800 individuals is being processed to appreciate usefulness of these networks. The University department works very closely with the International Longevity Centre-India. The evidence based research agenda for social gerontology has also been presented in a meeting with International Federation on Ageing.



## Social Epidemiology of chronic illnesses

Our research aims at understanding **social** distribution and **social** determinants as well as exploring pathways by which, societal conditions affect health. **This is** with particular reference to chronic illnesses; hypertension, diabetes, cancer . We work more on the causal pathways and engage qualitative as well as quantitative methods.

We use hypertension and diabetes as model to validate tools and standardize methodology. We have established reliability and validity of certain scales on Medical Adherence, brief Illness Perception Questionnaire The current research on diabetes aims at examining feasibility of use of a cultural model in identifying role of family and culture on the management of diabetes. The research is a part of comparative multi-country project in collaboration with Universities abroad.

### Risk perception of tobacco use:



Currently a doctoral student works on risk perception, which is a complex phenomenon. We know very little how people normally think about the magnitudes of risks. Do they think in terms of comparative risks or absolute individual risks? However research suggests that people have some kind of system to categorize risk and it differs in various cultural setting. It is possible to generate numerical risk estimates.

Based on these assumptions we have undertaken a study, which includes measurement of tobacco risk perception in adolescents (13-18 years). This is a cluster randomized trial and it tests effectiveness of comprehensive training manual and educational material in print and digital form. Swapnil Gadhawe, doctoral student.



Activities to change tobacco risk perception of adolescents

## Urbanization, transition and health

Research on urbanization, transition and health focuses on various dimensions of urbanization and its impact in health of different sections of society. Therefore current research focuses on exploring women's journey of becoming a smoker in the social context of urban India and at the same time reproductive tract infections and health care access to women in urban slums. Research aims at identifying the barriers to health care and health behaviour change among men and women in urban areas. We used reproductive tract infections as model for establishing peer led health promotion activities for women in urban slums.



Current research aims at creating a trained catalyst in the slum that will support and provide information to women in slum. Appropriate care referral linkages have been established. We used reproductive tract infection as a model for testing and intervention was conducted using quasi experimental design. Significant improvement in the knowledge and health seeking behaviour was seen compared to control group. Magnitude of self reported reproductive tract infection was reduced and timely treatment was sought by women. Education material in local language using culturally accepted illustrations were used during monthly health promotion activities. The research also aims at developing tools to measure gender equality and empowerment of women. Initial work focused more on collecting evidence about the way gender influences health in general and reproductive health in particular. Gender role, position, discrimination, empowerment are the integral aspects of our research on health, well being and morbidity. Out of pocket expenditure on maternity care, service utilization for postnatal health problems, maternal morbidity, reproductive tract infections are some of the neglected areas of research which are under scientific investigation using primary and secondary data analysis. International Collaboration for research and engagement partnerships for Urban Health Planning is underway. The project uses urban health planning framework to identify the role of public health in urban planning and compares model cities across the continents.



Manali Pandit , Doctoral student



Field activities: training of peer educators, peer educators delivering session in slum

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