

THE ROLE OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS IN HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION OF MOBILITY LIMITATIONS IN OLDER ADULTS

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Background: Study utilizes data from the fourth National Health Survey conducted in 2019 in the Republic of Serbia, aiming to contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the mobility of the elderly population. It examines the sociodemographic and psychosocial factors associated with functional limitations in older adults.

Methods and Objectives: Analysis is based on a sample of 3,705 participants aged 65 and above. Study examines the impact of variables such as age, gender, marital status, education, income, social support, and mental health on the prevalence of walking limitations. Questionnaires were used following the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) methodology. Statistical significance was assessed using the Chi-square test, with post-hoc pairwise z-tests. Univariate logistic regression identified predictors of walking difficulties, and multivariate logistic regression further explored these predictors while adjusting for confounding variables, estimating odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals.

Results: Women show a higher prevalence of walking difficulties compared to men ($p < 0.001$). Significant variation exists among different age groups, with individuals aged 75-84 showing the highest prevalence across all categories of walking difficulties ($p < 0.001$). Higher education levels correlate with fewer walking difficulties. Married or partnered individuals have 0.522 times lower odds of reporting walking difficulties compared to singles ($p < 0.05$). Lower wealth correlates with a higher prevalence of walking difficulties.

Conclusions: This knowledge can guide targeted interventions to improve mobility and well-being in older adults, promoting healthier and more active aging through effective strategies to address risk factors.

Keywords: Aging, functional limitations, socio-demographic factors, walking difficulties, population health