

# Social Network and Mental Health Among Older Adults in Rural Uttar Pradesh, India: A Cross-Sectional Study

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## Abstract

The rapid growth of the older population in India draws attention to the factors that contribute to their changing health realities. However, there has hardly been any study in India that has looked at the effects of specific social networks with children, relatives, friends and confidant on depression among older adults. The objective of the study is to investigate the association between social network and depression among the rural elderly. The study population comprised over 630 older adults (aged 60 and above) from the rural areas of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. We adopted Berkman's theoretical model of the impact of social relations on depression among the elderly in the Indian context. Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) demonstrated that the four specific social network types: children, relatives, friends and confidant were tenable. The results showed that a better social network with 'friends/neighbours' was protective against depression among the rural elderly. This clearly points to the need for more social network centres for older adults, so that they can interact with friends within the community or between communities and participate in group activities.

## Keywords

Older adults social network social support mental health depression

Uttar Pradesh India

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## Notes

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## Compliance with ethical standards

## Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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