

Abstract

Background and Objectives: With increasing age, physical dysfunction becomes more prevalent, leading to various problems in the elderly. Consequently, issues concerning elderly health, particularly those with decreased independence requiring more assistance, are among the priorities of health and medical care in most societies. This is due to the aging population and the health problems that necessitate immediate medical services. The increase in the number of elderly patients has strained not only healthcare services but also pre-hospital emergency services in terms of resources. The subjective experiences of individuals regarding emergencies are influenced by their need for relevant and timely information about emergency methods and their clinical status. These informational needs are also crucial for the caregivers of elderly patients in emergency situations. This study aims to elucidate the experiences of elderly individuals and service providers of pre-hospital emergency services in the city of Shiraz.

Methods: This research was carried out in three phases. Phases 1 and 2 involved the elderly and emergency technicians, and these portions of the study were qualitative and conducted using phenomenology. Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The sampling method for the elderly and technicians was purposeful and snowball sampling, continuing until data saturation was achieved. Data were analyzed using the Landman and Graneheim method. In phase 3, the experiences of the participants were investigated further, and a panel of experts was formed to provide recommendations.

Results: The present study encapsulates the experiences of 21 elderly individuals who utilized pre-hospital emergency services, 14 pre-hospital emergency technicians, and the report of the expert panel. The interview texts were analyzed, and conceptual codes were extracted. These

codes were then categorized into main classes which, for the elderly, included "ambulance conditions," "technician performance," "emergency response time," and "emergency regulations." For the technicians, they included "issues in history taking and patient examination," "problems with intravenous access," "communication issues with the elderly," "multiple underlying conditions," "problems in patient transport and transfer," and "hospital transfer".

Conclusion: The experiences of the elderly indicate problems they face when receiving pre-hospital emergency services, including the poor condition of ambulances, technician performance issues, emergency response times, and regulations causing dissatisfaction. On the other hand, the experiences of emergency technicians highlight challenges in delivering services to the elderly, such as difficulties in history taking, intravenous access, communication, multiple underlying conditions, and issues in patient transport to the ambulance and hospital. Recommendations to address these problems were provided by the expert panel, which it is hoped will be useful in policymaking to improve services for the elderly in pre-hospital emergencies.

Keywords: experiences, elderly, prehospital emergency services, providers, qualitative study .



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