Trends in chronic diseases among the oldest-old in China

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Conference date:} 29 September–1 October 2015
  \item \textbf{Location:} Kedah, Malaysia
\end{itemize}

This study examined the prevalence of several chronic diseases among the oldest-old in China. Data came from the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey (CLHLS) of 4 waves collected in 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2011, filtered to include individuals aged 80 and above. Bivariate and logistic regression methods were used in analyses. There were significant differences in the prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, chronic heart diseases, stroke/cardiovascular diseases, cancer and dementia, which generally saw an increase across the 4 waves. By contrast, prevalence of Parkinson was not significantly different over the 4 waves. Logistic regression results revealed that since 2002, hypertension had been significantly higher in subsequent waves in 2005, 2008 and 2011. Stroke had also shown significant increase in the 2008 and 2011 waves. Other chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, Parkinson and dementia were only found to be significantly higher in the recent 2011 wave compared to the initial wave in 2002. Arthritis, which initially increased in earlier waves, had dropped significantly in the recent 2011 wave. However, respiratory conditions had been significantly lower since the initial wave in 2002. Generally, findings confirmed the increasing trend of chronic morbidity in recent years among the oldest-old in China. Long life expectancy coupled with chronic morbidity in very late age will duly have societal and economic implications.

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