

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Home Health Care Services, A Paradigm Shift; An Attitudinal Survey

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## HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Neeraj Kumar Bansal, Reeja Raju. Home Health Care Services, A Paradigm Shift; An Attitudinal Survey. Int J Practical Nurs. 2025; 13(2): 43-47.

## ABSTRACT

**Aims & Objective:** Home health care services are increasingly recognized as a viable and necessary alternative to institutionalized care, particularly in the face of an aging population, rising chronic disease burden, and escalating healthcare costs.

**Material:** This attitudinal survey, conducted among 60 participants including patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals explores perceptions of home health care in relation to its convenience, cost-effectiveness, emotional impact, and challenges.

**Results:** Indicated that 80% of patients reported satisfaction with home-based care, while 85% of caregivers found it more convenient than institutional care. However, quality of care (45%) and caregiver burden (35%) emerged as significant concerns. Additionally, socio-demographic factors such as income, age, and education were found to influence attitudes, with more favourable perceptions among older, higher-income, and better-educated individuals.

**Conclusion:** These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the benefits of personalized, patient-centred home care, while also highlighting the ongoing need for robust training, resource allocation, and policy development to ensure equitable access and quality assurance in home-based healthcare. This research underscores the transformative potential of home health care and calls for strengthened support systems to address its limitations.

## KEYWORDS:

- Home Health Care • Elderly Population • Chronic Illness • Cost-Effectiveness
- Quality of Care • Personalized Care

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➤ Received: 23.04.2025 ➤ Accepted: 21.07.2025



## INTRODUCTION

Home health care includes the nursing services and products provided to clients in their homes that are needed to maintain restore or promote their physical, psychological & social wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> This is needed due to:

**High Rise in Elderly Population:** According to Population Census 2011, nearly 104 million, by 2019, over 139 million elderly persons in India. It is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026 and in 2050 with 319 million people aged over 60. This means that every 1 in 5 Indians is likely to be a senior citizen.<sup>2,3</sup>

**High Prevalence of Chronic Illness:** Two in every three senior citizens in India suffer from some chronic disease, around 23 per cent of the elderly population (age 60 years and above) have multi-morbidities.<sup>4,5</sup>

**Need For Surgical Interventions:** 5000 surgeries are required to meet the surgical burden of diseases of 100,000 people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).<sup>6,7</sup>

**Affordability:** Health expenditure per capita of India increased from 25 US dollars in 2004 to 73 US dollars in 2018 growing at an average annual rate of 8.10%.<sup>8</sup>

Home health care services have emerged as a critical component of the modern healthcare system, offering an alternative to traditional hospital-based care. With advancements in medical technology and a growing elderly population, there is an increasing shift towards providing care at home, which is seen as more convenient, cost-effective, and emotionally supportive for patients and their families. This research report aims to explore the attitudes of patients, families, and healthcare professionals towards home health care services through an attitudinal survey of 60 participants.

### Objectives of the Study

- To assess the overall attitude towards home health care services among patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.
- To understand the perceived benefits and challenges of home health care services from different stakeholders.
- To analyse how socio-demographic factors (age, gender, income, education) influence attitudes towards home health care.

- To evaluate the level of satisfaction among patients and families who have experienced home health care services.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have examined the rise of home health care services and their acceptance by various stakeholders. Studies have shown that home health care can improve patient outcomes by reducing hospital readmission rates, promoting patient comfort, and allowing for more personalized care. However, concerns remain about the quality of care, the burden on family caregivers, and the availability of adequate resources.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** A cross-sectional survey design was employed to assess the attitudes towards home health care services.

**Sample Size:** A total of 60 respondents were selected for the survey, including 20 patients receiving home health care, 20 family caregivers, and 20 healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors, and home care aides).

**Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling was used to select participants from a mix of urban and semi-urban areas to ensure diversity in perspectives.

**Data Collection:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on participants' attitudes towards home health care services. The survey was administered in person and via telephone to accommodate the preferences of participants.

**Data Analysis:** The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test) used to examine the relationship between socio-demographic variables and attitudes.

## RESULTS

### Attitudes Towards Home Health Care Services

#### Overall Satisfaction with Home Health Care Services

- 80% of patients (16 out of 20) reported satisfaction with the care they received at home.

- Family caregivers were more divided, with 65% expressing satisfaction and 35% expressing concerns over the burden of care.
- 90% of healthcare professionals agreed that home health care services are beneficial, especially for long-term patients, though 40% noted the challenge of ensuring quality control.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<i>Age</i>		
18-30 years	10	16.7%
31-50 years	20	33.3%
51-70 years	25	41.7%
71 years & above	5	8.3%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	30	50%
Female	30	50%
<i>Income Levels</i>		
Low-income	20	33.3%
Middle-income	30	50%
High-income	10	16.7%

### Perceived Benefits of Home Health Care Services

**Convenience:** 85% of patients and family caregivers reported that receiving care at home was more convenient than traveling to hospitals or clinics.

**Emotional Support:** 75% of respondents felt that home care allows for more emotional support from family members, improving the mental well-being of patients.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** 70% of patients and families cited cost savings, particularly in transportation and hospital stay expenses, as a major advantage of home health care services.

### Perceived Challenges of Home Health Care Services

**Quality of Care:** 45% of respondents (especially healthcare professionals) expressed concerns about the ability to monitor patient conditions as closely as in hospital settings, which could affect the quality of care.

**Burden on Family Caregivers:** 35% of family caregivers reported feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for their loved ones at home, particularly when professional help was limited.

**Access to Resources:** 30% of respondents, particularly those in semi-urban areas, noted a lack of adequate resources, such as medical equipment and trained personnel, as a challenge in home health care.

### Influence of Socio-Demographic Factors on Attitudes

**Income:** Higher-income families reported higher levels of satisfaction with home health care services, as they could afford additional private care or medical equipment.

**Age:** Older respondents (50+ years) were more likely to appreciate home health care services due to the comfort of receiving care at home during their senior years.

**Education:** Respondents with higher education levels showed a more favourable attitude towards home health care, as they understood the potential benefits and limitations better than those with lower education levels.

The findings suggest that attitudes towards home health care services are largely positive, especially in terms of convenience, emotional support, and cost-effectiveness. However, there are concerns regarding the quality of care and the burden placed on family caregivers. These concerns were more prevalent among healthcare professionals and caregivers, highlighting the need for structured support systems and trained professionals in home care settings.

The study also found that socio-demographic factors like income, age, and education significantly influenced attitudes, with higher-income and better-educated individuals showing a more favourable view of home health care. This may indicate the need for targeted awareness programs to educate and support lower-income and less-educated families regarding home health care benefits and resources.

## DISCUSSION

The study highlights the growing preference for home health care services due to their

convenience, emotional support, and cost-effectiveness. The majority of patients and caregivers expressed satisfaction with home care, emphasizing that it allows patients to remain in familiar surroundings, which contributes to better emotional well-being. Moreover, healthcare professionals acknowledged the benefits of home care, particularly for long-term and chronic illness management. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in ensuring consistent quality of care and reducing the burden on family caregivers. These concerns align with the findings of previous studies that suggest home health care services, while beneficial, need structured support systems and quality control mechanisms.

Socio-demographic factors also played a notable role in shaping attitudes. Higher-income, older, and better-educated respondents showed more positive attitudes, likely due to their ability to access additional resources and better understand the benefits of home care. This underscores the importance of designing home care services that cater to diverse populations, particularly in terms of affordability and access in semi-urban and rural areas.

To address the challenges identified in this study, healthcare providers and policymakers must develop strategies to improve the training and support for home care professionals, provide more resources for family caregivers, and enhance the overall accessibility of home health care services across socio-economic groups.

## CONCLUSION

Home health care services represent a significant shift in the way healthcare is delivered, especially in the context of an aging population and the growing demand for personalized, patient-centred care. While most respondents expressed positive attitudes towards home health care, concerns about quality and caregiver burden need to be addressed through policy interventions, better training for home care professionals, and enhanced support for families.

## Nursing Implications

Home health care services offer a vital opportunity for nursing professionals to extend their role beyond the hospital setting

into the home environment. Nurses can:

- **Provide education and training** to family caregivers, helping them manage the complexities of home care and reducing caregiver burden.
- **Monitor patient care quality** by ensuring adherence to clinical protocols and providing telehealth consultations when in-person visits are not feasible.
- **Develop personalized care plans** that consider both the medical and emotional needs of patients and their families.
- **Promote interdisciplinary collaboration** with other healthcare professionals to ensure holistic care and timely access to necessary medical resources.
- **Advocate for policies** that support equitable access to home health care services, particularly for vulnerable populations in semi-urban or rural areas.

## Recommendations

**Enhance Training Programs for Home Care Professionals:** Continuous training for home health aides and nurses should be prioritized to ensure high-quality care is delivered at home.

**Support for Family Caregivers:** Provide counselling, respite care, and financial support to alleviate the burden on family caregivers.

**Improve Access to Resources in Semi-Urban Areas:** Expand the availability of medical equipment, home care services, and healthcare professionals in less accessible regions.

**Raise Awareness about Home Health Care Services:** Conduct public health campaigns to educate families about the benefits and resources available for home health care services, especially targeting lower-income groups.

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