

Exploring pain and frailty among older surgical patients in Ethiopia: association, effects on postoperative pain and clinicians' viewpoints

Abstract

The combined burden of frailty and chronic pain due to population ageing poses significant challenges to healthcare systems. Studies have shown a bidirectional relationship between chronic pain and frailty, with each condition as a risk factor for the development of the other. In older surgical populations, both have significant perioperative implications, including an increased rate of complications and poor surgical outcomes. However, the prevalence of each condition and their occurrence in hospital settings, particularly among older surgical patients in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the relationship with postoperative pain, is not well understood. Moreover, the perioperative health professional's perspective on the enablers and barriers of quality postoperative pain management is not well explored. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the prevalence, determinants, and impact of preoperative frailty and chronic pain on postoperative pain-related outcomes among older surgical patients in Ethiopia, while exploring the viewpoints of perioperative healthcare providers on opportunities and barriers to quality postoperative pain management. This research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of pain and frailty, laying the groundwork for large-scale projects and improving perioperative care for older adults, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Additionally, it will provide policy recommendations for perioperative care specifically targeting this demographic in Sub-Saharan Africa.