Self-Reported Physical Health Symptoms among Retired Teachers in Lagelu Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Health of an individual at any stage of life is important. Retirement can have far-reaching consequences on individuals, encompassing physical, mental, and financial well-being.

Objective: This study assessed self-reported physical health symptoms among retired teachers in Lagelu local government area, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all retired primary school teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula, and a total of 221 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using a Cronbach's alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72. Socio-demographic data and the research questions were analyzed using a descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages.

Results: The findings revealed that gradual decline in the ability to see clearly (64.7%) was the prominent visual problem reported by the respondents. The musculoskeletal symptom mostly reported was joint pain during movement (79.2%), and dizziness or loss of balance was the top most cardiovascular-related symptoms reported among the retired teachers surveyed.

Conclusion: Retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State reported a high range of visual, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular-related symptoms.

Recommendations: It was recommended that retired teachers should be encouraged to undergo periodic eye examination, engage in age-appropriate physical activities, and undergo periodic medical check-ups including blood pressure measurement and cardiovascular risk assessment.

Keywords: Health, Health problems, Physical health problems, Retired teachers

INTRODUCTION

Health of an individual at any stage of life is important. People in active civil service must take good care of their health in order to have a good health status during post-retirement life. Post-retirement life poses series of health challenges due to ageing and physical inactivity. Retirement represents a major turning point in an individual's life, which may lead to a significant shift in daily life and routines. Retirement usually refers to withdrawal from paid working life. Farland and Kowalczyk (2026) defined retirement as the transition from being employed in a career to relinquishing all responsibilities related to that career. Also, a person who has retired from their job is called a retiree. Studies have shown that retirement marks a critical turning point, leading to far-reaching consequences that affect numerous aspects of a person's life (Dar et al., 2018). Retirement is often linked to a range of challenges, including physical health issues and socio-economic difficulties (Musila et al., 2019). Kennedy et al. (2014) posited that aging is associated with the onset of chronic diseases and physical decline. Retirement can have far-reaching consequences on individuals, encompassing physical, mental, and financial well-being. As individuals age, physical limitations emerge due to natural changes, including visual impairments, bodily aches, and conditions like arthritis. The focus of this study is mainly on self-reported physical health symptoms among retired teachers with respect to visual, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular-related symptoms.

Physical health challenge refers to any condition or ailment that adversely affects an individual's physical well-being and functioning (Friedman & Kern, 2014). These challenges can arise from a variety of sources including, diseases, injuries, lifestyle factor, environmental factor, genetic pre-dispositions and social determinants of health (Johnston et al., 2015). According to Katz et al., (2016), physical health problems include obesity and inadequate physical activity which are the risk factors for diabetes, stroke, some cancers and cardiovascular diseases that can significantly lower life expectancy. Many retired teachers are struggling with a myriad of physical health challenges that accompany the aging process, significantly influencing their post-career well-being (Friedman & Kern, 2014). The aging population is susceptible to falls, nervous system disorders and dental issues which contribute to a complex array of physical health challenges (Lindert et al., 2015).

One among the physical health challenges facing retired teachers based on their age is visual problem. According to Bennett et al. (2019), visual problem refers to any condition or impairment that affects a person's ability to see clearly or interpret visual information accurately. This can include issues such as blurry vision, difficulty focusing, reduced peripheral vision, colour blindness, or complete loss of vision (Taylor et al., 2016). These visual impairments not only compromise the clarity of their vision, but also impede their ability to perform routine daily activities (Abdolrahmani et al., 2018). In the study of Chukwuka et al. (2016), the most common ocular morbidities reported among the public service retirees were bilateral cataract (21.1%), glaucoma/glaucoma suspects (16.4%), uncorrected refractive error/presbyopia (18.6%), pseudophakia (7.8%), diabetic retinopathy (5.4%), allergic conjunctivitis (2.9%), age-related macular degeneration (5.4%) to mention a few. Again, in the study of Mulinde et al. (2022), among the elderly patients, cataract (54.05%) was the leading cause of blindness, followed by refractive error (21.62%), glaucoma (11.7%) and corneal opacities (5.4%), age-related macular degeneration (1.8%), hypertensive retinopathy (1.8%).

Visual problems can present significant challenges for retired teachers due to the nature of their profession, which often involves extensive reading, grading papers, and writing on chalkboards or whiteboards (Bennett et al., 2019). As they age, they may experience declines in vision, making their tasks more difficult **(**Walstad et al., 2017). People aged 50 years and above contributed 82% of the global burden of blindness (Pascolini & Mariotti, 2012). A study by Jones et al. (2019) revealed that, visual impairments can hinder the ability to engage in leisure activities such as reading or watching television thereby impacting their overall quality of lives. The prevalence of visual impairment can substantially diminish the overall quality of life of retired teachers, necessitating adaptive strategies and support to navigate the unique visual challenges that

accompany aging and ensuring their continued well-being in the post-employment phase (Chambers-Mack et al., 2019).

Musculoskeletal problem is another health challenge among retired teachers. Musculoskeletal disorders include a wide range of degenerative and inflammatory conditions affecting the joints, muscles, ligaments, tendons, bones and nerves (Wiitawaara et al., 2017). Muscular problem refers to any condition or issue affecting the muscles of the body, leading to difficulties in movement, strength, coordination, or function **(**Duan et al., 2021). It can result from various causes, including injuries, diseases, genetic disorders or neurological conditions affecting the muscles (Tieland et al., 2018). The work of teachers, such as using computers, reading, checking and scoring quizzes and assignments, often involves spending a significant amount of time in a head-down posture (Prieto-Gonzalez et al., 2021). Going by the cumulative effects of such posture, teachers have a greater risk of developing back, neck, and upper-limb musculoskeletal problems (Korkmaz et al., 2011). Kovac et al. (2013) affirmed that chronic musculoskeletal problems increase with age (The aging process frequently brings about muscular challenges for retired teachers, commonly manifesting as joint pain and arthritis. As individuals transit into the retirement phase of life, the cumulative effects of aging based on nature of previous work may contribute to the development of these conditions, leading to diminished mobility, increased pain and stiffness (Duan et al., 2021). Among the retired teachers, muscular problems can negatively impact their ability to participate in regular activities (Tieland et al., 2018). Addressing these challenges becomes imperative in promoting the overall well-being of retired educators, requiring a focus on strategies to alleviate pain, enhance mobility, and support an active and fulfilling lifestyle during the post-employment phase (Mahmoud & Rothenberger, 2019).

Cardiovascular problem refers to any disorder affecting the heart or blood vessels, leading to impaired function or increased risk of heart attacks or strokes (Flora & Nayak, 2019). Retired teachers frequently face substantial health challenges, particularly in the area of cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension, stroke and heart-related problems. The sedentary lifestyle that accompanies post-retirement life can exacerbate these conditions, posing significant risks to their overall well-being (Flora & Nayak, 2019). The prevalence of hypertension and other heart-related problems underscores the importance of proactive health management during the post-employment phase. Cardiovascular problems can significantly impact retired teachers in many ways, affecting their quality of life and ability to enjoy their retirement period. According to Huang et al. (2022), cardiovascular problems may limit a retired teacher's ability to engage in physical activities they once enjoyed, such as walking, hiking or gardening. This can lead to a more sedentary lifestyle, increasing the risk of weight gain and further increase cardiovascular problems. Cardiovascular problems can have profound impacts on retired teachers, affecting their physical health, financial stability, social connections, emotional well-being, and family dynamics (Buskens et al., 2019).

Managing cardiovascular conditions often entails medical expenses, including medications, frequent hospital visits, sometimes hospitalization and surgeries or procedures when necessary. They often require medical intervention and lifestyle changes to manage effectively and prevent complications (Rosendorff et al., 2015). The cost incurred for treatment can strain retirement savings, especially if the retired teacher is living on a fixed income, potentially leading to financial stress and anxiety (Slavin et al., 2021). Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2026) revealed that eating lots of foods high in fibres and low in saturated fats, trans fat, and cholesterol, limiting salt and sugar in diets, drinking less alcohol, keeping healthy weight, regular physical activities, avoidance of smoke, control of high blood pressure and diabetes management can lower the risk for cardiovascular problems. Among the strategies for effective cardiovascular prevention include early detection or diagnosis of cardiovascular diseases, precise risk stratification, individualized interventions, and continuous reassessment to optimize long-term outcomes (Visseren et al., 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Retirement itself may not be inherently stressful, but the absence of essential resources, delayed gratuity payments, and irregular pension distribution can create significant challenges for retirees. These resources are crucial for maintaining a decent standard of living after retirement, and their unavailability can have a profound impact on retirees' well-being. Based on the interaction of the researchers, it was observed that

many retirees in Lagelu local government area (LGA) are suffering from loss of physical strengths, insomnia, stroke, hypertension, eye and dental problems which are connected to age factor. Many of them depend on their children who are working; while some depend solely on their meager pension to take care of their failing health. Daramola et al. (2018) documented increased prevalence of chronic diseases among retirees and older persons in Nigeria such as cardiovascular diseases, endocrine/metabolic diseases, disease of the musculoskeletal systems, ocular diseases among others with increased healthcare utilization and financial burden. Also, studies in Southwestern Nigeria, particularly the Ibadan study of ageing, have shown that chronic conditions such as hypertension, pain, and usual impairment were prevalent among older adults and significantly contribute to disability (Ojagbemi, 2017). In Lagelu LGA, to the best knowledge of the researchers, there is no scholarly work focusing on physical health challenges among retired primary school teachers. Based on these, the researchers assessed the physical health challenges among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria with a view of making workable recommendations where necessary.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. What visual symptoms are self-reported by retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. What musculoskeletal symptoms are self-reported by retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. What cardiovascular-related symptoms are self-reported among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted. The population of the study consists all retired primary school teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria. Taro Yamane's formula $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$ was used for the sample size determination. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 221 respondents for the study based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Self-Reported Physical Health Symptoms among Retired Teachers (SPHSRT)". The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Public Health. Ambiguous and medical-related terms that can cause confusion to the respondents were removed. The items in relation to the variables of the study were closely scrutinized. The comments and suggestions of the experts were used to make the final copy of the instrument used. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ministry of Health, Department of Planning, Research & Statistics Division number AD13/479/663. The consents of all the respondents were obtained, and confidentiality of the information collected was maintained. Three trained research assistants helped in the administration of the copies of the instrument to the respondents during their monthly meeting days. During their monthly meeting, permission was obtained from the executive members for the distribution of the questionnaire. Each participant was allowed to fill the questionnaire independently without any interference. Submission was made on the spot, and this improves the high retrieval rate. The demographic data and the research questions were analyzed and presented using frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age Range		
	45-54 years	13	5.9
	55 - 64	95	43.0

	years		
	65 & above	113	51.1
	Total	221	100.0
2	Gender		
	Male	83	37.6
	Female	138	62.4
	Total	221	100.0

The table shows that most respondents 113 (51.1%) were between the age range 65 years & above and the least age range was 45-54 years. Also, females had the highest proportion of 138 (62.4%) compare to males 83 (37.6%).

Research Question One: What visual symptoms are self-reported by retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 2. Distribution of Self-Reported Visual Symptoms among Retired Teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria

N= 221

S/n	Self-reported visual symptoms	Yes (%)	No(%)
1	Blurred vision (difficulty seeing objects clearly)	123(55.7)	98(44.3)
2	Temporary loss of vision in one or both eyes	118(53.4)	103(46.6)
3	Cloudy or hazy vision	126(57.0)	95(43.0)
4	Difficulty seeing clearly in bright light or at night	135(61.0)	86(39.0)
5	Gradual decline in ability to see clearly over time	143(64.7)	78(35.3)
	Total	645(58.4)	460(41.6)

In the Table 2, gradual decline in the ability to see clearly overtime was the most reported visual symptom (64.7%), followed by difficult seeing clearly in bright light or at night (61.0%). The least reported visual symptom is temporary loss of vision in one or both eyes (53.4%). The finding implies that visual symptoms were commonly reported among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA. Those findings represent self-reported visual symptoms and do not establish clinically diagnosed eye conditions.

Research Question Two: What musculoskeletal symptoms are self-reported by retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Distribution of Self-Reported Musculoskeletal Symptoms among Retired Teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria

N= 221

S/N	Self-Reported Musculoskeletal Symptoms	Yes (%)	No(%)
1	Difficulty walking a moderate distance (e.g., 100–200 meters	158(71.5)	63(28.5)
2	Joint pain (e.g., knees, hips, or shoulders) during movement	162(73.3)	59(26.7)
3	Muscle weakness affecting daily activities	141(63.8)	80(36.2)
4	Difficulty standing for a long period (e.g. 10–15 minutes	140(63.3)	81(36.7)
5	Body pain or discomfort when performing routine tasks (e.g. bending, lifting)	139(62.9)	82(37.1)
	Total	740(67.0)	365(33.0)

In the Table 3, joint pain during movement was the top most reported musculoskeletal symptom (73.3%), followed by difficulty walking a moderate distance (71.5%). The least self-reported musculoskeletal symptom was body pain or discomfort when performing routine tasks (62.9%). The finding implies that

retired teachers in Lagelu LGA experienced various musculoskeletal symptoms and functional difficulties. This does not confirm any specific musculoskeletal disorders.

Research Question Three: What cardiovascular-related symptoms are self-reported among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4: Distribution of Self-Reported Cardiovascular-Related Symptoms among Retired Teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria

N= 221

S/N	Self-Reported Cardiovascular-Related Symptoms	Yes (%)	No(%)
1	Persistent headaches or pressure in the head	161(72.9)	60(27.1)
2	Chest pain or discomfort during physical activity (e.g. walking, climbing stairs)	142(64.3)	79(35.7)
3	Shortness of breath during mild or moderate activity	119(53.8)	102(46.2)
4	Sudden weakness or numbness in the face, arm, or leg	47(21.3)	174(78.7)
5	Dizziness or loss of balance	175(79.2)	46(20.8)
	Total	644(58.3)	461(41.7)

In the Table 4, dizziness or loss of balance (79.2%) was the most prominent reported cardiovascular-related symptom, followed by persistent headache or pressure in the head (72.9%). The least reported symptom was sudden weakness or numbness in the face, arm, or leg ((21.3%). The finding implies that retired teachers in Lagelu LGA reported high proportion of cardiovascular-related symptoms. However, symptoms reported above cannot establish the presence of cardiovascular diseases without further clinical assessment. .

DISCUSSION

In the table one, a total of 221 retired teachers participated in the study. More females 62.4% participated in the study compared to males (37.6%). Most retirees 51.5% were in the age range 65 years & above. The findings in the table 2 showed the distribution of self-reported visual symptoms among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria. Among the respondents, 64.7%, 61.0%, 57.0%, 55.7% 53.4% reported a gradual decline in the ability to see clearly over time, difficulty seeing clearly in bright light or at night, cloudy or hazy vision, blurred vision, and temporary loss of vision in one or both eyes respectively. The results of the finding are in line with the submission of Musila et al. (2019) that retirees often experience age-related poor eye sight. It further align with the findings of Chukwuka et al. (2016) who reported bilateral cataract (21.1%), glaucoma/glaucoma suspects (16.4%), uncorrected refractive error/presbyopia (18.6%), pseudophakia (7.8%), diabetic retinopathy (5.4%), allergic conjunctivitis (2.9%), age-related macular degeneration (5.4%) as the most common ocular morbidities among the public service retirees. This might be connected to the nature of teaching profession while in service which include extensive reading, grading papers, and writing on chalkboards or whiteboards (Bennett et al., 2019) and age-related factor **(**Walstad et al., 2017).

The findings in the table 3 revealed the distribution of self-reported musculoskeletal symptoms among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria. Among the respondents, 71.5%, 73.3%, 63.8%, 63.3% and 62.9% reported difficulty walking for a moderate distance, joint pain during movement, muscle weakness that affects daily activities, difficulty standing for a long period and body pain or discomfort when performing routine tasks respectively. The results of the finding corroborate the assertion of Korkmaz et al. (2011) that teachers have a greater risk of developing back, neck, and upper-limb musculoskeletal problems. This might be connected to their nature of work while in active service such as using computers, reading, checking and scoring quizzes and assignments, which involves head-down posture for a long period (Prieto-Gonzalez et. al., 2021). Also, Duan et al. (2021) reported diminished mobility, increased pain and stiffness during retirement phase among teachers. Musila et al. (2019) opined that aging posed a greater risk for back pain and arthritis.

The findings in the table 4 showed the distribution of self-reported cardiovascular-related symptoms among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria. Among the respondents, 79.2%, 72.9%, 64.3%, 53.8% 21.3% reported dizziness or loss of balance, persistent headaches or pressure in your head, chest pain or discomfort during physical activities, shortness of breath during mild or moderate activities and sudden weakness or numbness in the face, arm, or leg respectively. The results of this finding align with the submission of Huang et al. (2022) that cardiovascular problems limit retired teachers' ability to engage in physical activities such as walking, hiking, gardening among others. Also, Flora and Nayak (2019) opined that sedentary lifestyle that accompanies retirement can increase cardiovascular problems posing a significant risk to their overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that visual, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular-related symptoms were commonly reported among retired teachers in Lagelu LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study conclusion, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Retired teachers should be encouraged to undergo periodic eye examination by eye specialists for the early identification and appropriate management of any visual conditions.
2. Retired teachers should be encouraged to engage in age-appropriate physical activities suited their functional abilities and physical limitations.
3. Retired teachers should undergo periodic medical check-ups, including blood pressure measurement and cardiovascular risk assessment.
4. Branch executive members in collaboration with relevant health professionals should organize health education programmes on healthy aging and preventive healthcare services for the retired teachers in Lagelu LGA.

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Limitation of the Study

The study was limited to self-reported physical health symptoms by the retired teachers, without any clinically assessment or medically confirmed diagnosis. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as clinically confirmed physical health conditions.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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