

Perceptions on ageing

- Generally, old people feel good to have lived that far
 - Not many of the present generation will reach old age
 - They enjoy being consulted for advice, history and wisdom
 - They enjoy seeing themselves living beyond them (through their descendants)
- However, **getting old while poor, with no support, ill-health and lack of food makes the process of ageing painful**
- Most elderly are becoming active parents again and they are caring for their sick children as well as grandchildren
- As more young adults die (probably due to HIV/AIDS), the elderly are blamed for witchcraft

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Housing conditions

- Generally very poor

"... sometimes it may be an old building left by other people and may be extensively damaged on one side while we are using the other side" – 75 yr old woman, Linyama Village

"Most of us the elderly men live alone and it is difficult to fetch water and firewood.... You have to learn a woman's job, something our parents did not teach us" – 87 yr old man, Linyama village

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Housing conditions cont'd

Characteristics	Sex of the elderly		Total (N=250)
	Male (n=99)	Female (n=151)	
Type of roofing material			
Grass	58.6	66.2	63.2
Iron sheets	40.4	31.8	35.2
Tiles	0.0	1.3	0.8
Other	1.0	0.7	0.8
Type of wall materials			
Mud only	7.1	11.3	9.6
Mud and pole	8.1	4.0	5.6
Grass and pole	6.1	0.7	2.8
Un burnt bricks	43.4	43.0	43.2
Burnt bricks	35.4	39.1	37.6
Concrete	0.0	2.0	1.2
Type of windows			
No windows	40.4	62.9	54.0
Timber	21.2	10.6	14.8
Grass	32.3	21.9	26.0
Other	6.1	4.6	5.2

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Ownership of Livestock and Assets

- Ownership of livestock and assets was found to be low among the respondents, especially among the females
- 41% had chickens (50% of males, 35% of the females)
- 12% of males and 8% of females had goats
- Very low figures were reported for cattle (2%), sheep and goats (<1%)

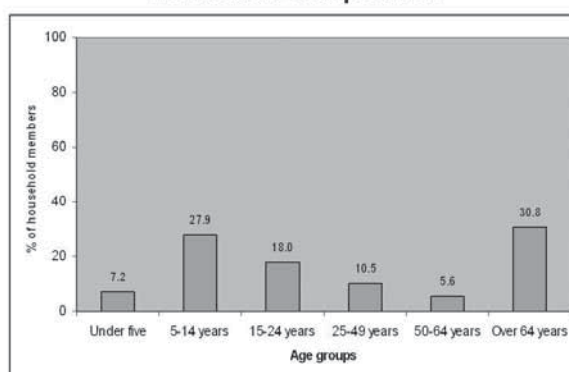
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Ownership of Assets

Type of asset	Sex of the elderly		Total (N=250)
	Male (n=99)	Female (n=151)	
Bicycle	53.5	16.6	31.2
Radio	68.7	30.5	45.6
TV	7.1	2.0	4.0
Bed	37.4	20.5	27.2
Mosquitonet	74.7	57.0	64.0
Latrine	83.7	64.0	28.2

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Household Composition



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Proportion living with orphans

Number of Orphans in HH	Elderly males (n=99)	Elderly females (n=151)	All elderly (N=250)
0	78.8	65.6	70.8
1	10.1	14.6	12.8
2	7.1	10.6	9.2
3	1.0	6.0	4.0
4 or more	3.0	3.3	3.2

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The elderly and Orphans cont'd

- 39% of 140 orphans in the survey had lost both parents; a similar proportion (39%) had lost their fathers while 22% had lost their mothers
- 79% of orphans had become orphans in the last 2 years
- 62% had lost their parents through long-term illnesses (3 months or more)
- The average age among the orphans was 8.7 years therefore requiring more than 10 years of surrogate parenting to reach adulthood
- 91% of orphans were grandchildren of the elderly

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Orphans cont'd

- 47% of orphans started staying with their grandparents because there were not other relatives to take custody of them; 6% because they had been rejected elsewhere;
- Only 8% of elderly reported not to have lost any of their children; 25% had lost more than 5 children; 37% had lost 3-5 children; 30% had lost 1-2 children
- Over half of the children (53%) of elderly died from long-term illnesses
- Although not necessarily elucidated from the findings of this survey, HIV and AIDS are exacerbating the already fragile livelihoods of the elderly
- It would be good to design interventions that target orphans complete education beyond primary school e.g. free secondary and tertiary education

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Access to natural Resources

- Firewood is the main source of energy for cooking for 98% of respondents; gas is used for lighting by only 1% of elderly males and none of females
- Electricity is used by 5% of respondents (6% of the males and 4% of the females)
- FGD participants expressed complaints over sources of firewood being very far, the costs of buying charcoal being high (>K700 per bag) while firewood costs K100 for three pieces of wood
- Venturing into firewood or charcoal business is not an option because tree cutting is illegal
- Individual or communal woodlots are not existent; land scarcity was cited as a limiting factor

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Natural resources cont'd - water

- Water sources are very far and some of these dry up in the dry season
- Elderly males living alone find problems fetching water
- Boreholes (although very few and far), are main sources of water for 57%; unprotected wells account for 15%; tap water 23%

"because there is only one borehole, there is too much congestion such that people like me find difficulties to line up and withstand the pressure ... the problem is that these young ones do not give respect to the elderly they say that respect is only given when we are in the village and not at a water point..." 73 year and 66 year old women (Ndelemani and Kasambwe villages, respectively)

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"some of the younger women kick out our plastic containers when we put them on the queue challenging that if we have the power we should retaliate and they kick them like football" – 73 year old woman, Ndelemani village

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Fish

- Fish is generally eaten by most of the households in the study (96%) although the regularity is lower in households where elderly females were interviewed
- FGD participants indicated preference for fish as source of proteins for the elderly than other meats (because of softness and cost)
- None of elderly females indicated fish or fishing as a livelihood resource hence they have to rely on the markets and vendors

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Food Consumption Patterns

- Consumption of food is erratic among the elderly in the study arising from:
 - Shortages of food in the homes
 - Shortages of other supplies (water, firewood)
 - Lack of labour (especially in households with the elderly males only)
- 17% reported to eat three meals a day; 74% reported to eat two meals and 9% usually eats one meal only (mainly mid-day meals)
- Consumption of snacks was reportedly very low as well consumption of meats and milk

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Food Consumption cont'd

	Sex of the elderly		
	Male (n=99)	Female (n=151)	Total (N=250)
% spent 1 day without food the whole day	24.2	27.8	26.4
% ate non-regular food because regular not available	56.6	57.0	56.8
% ate one meal only the whole day	56.6	62.3	60.0

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Major Health Problems of the Elderly

Condition of health	Sex of the elderly		Total (N=250)
	Male (n=99)	Female (n=151)	
Overall condition (personal assessment)			
Physically fit	31.3	12.6	20.0
Frequently sick	21.2	37.7	31.2
On and off	40.4	39.7	40.0
Very old and frail	7.1	9.9	8.8
Common disease problems			
Rheumatism/backaches	64.3	63.6	63.9
Malaria	29.6	21.9	24.9
Diarrhoea	8.2	2.6	4.8
Upper respiratory infections	54.1	68.2	62.7

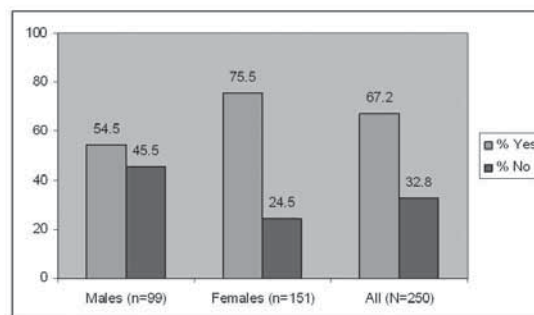
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Treatment seeking

- 19% of elderly females (n=130) and 11% of males (n=82) who reported some illness in last 3 months did not seek treatment
- Main reason for not seeking treatment was 'not seeing the need after several trials (76%); no caretakers to take them to hospital (15%)
- Ill-treatment by some staff at facilities was also reported by FGD participants

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Health Problems cont'd – Disabilities related to ageing



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Nature of the disability	Sex of the elderly		Total (N=168)
	Male (n=54)	Female (n=114)	
Hearing problems	28.6	71.4	57.6
Vision problems	35.1	64.9	55.3
Memory Loss Problems	21.4	78.6	60.2
Psychological	50.0	50.0	50.2
Other (e.g. skeletal problems)	10.8	89.2	64.0

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- "sometimes I cannot see properly, I see hazy figures actually now when looking at you if I was far, I could have thought that you are all maize until you speak..." - (65 year old man, Linyama village)
- "Like myself, I can keep money today in my house and tomorrow I will go to borrow from my neighbours because I cannot locate where I had put the money..." - 67 year old woman, Kasambwe village

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Access to Social Protection

- 42% of males and 38% of females reported that their households were visited by a CBO/FBO, NGO or government officer for external support in last 12 months
- The majority of these received food/nutritional support
- 58% of males and 56% of females reported to have received coupons from the 2006/07 ISP
- FGD respondents had reservations over distribution channels and criteria for releasing coupons (e.g. to show proof that one can afford K950; and participation in development programmes)

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Other Problems being faced by the elderly

- Various forms of abuse (verbal and physical)
 - Both in households, community and at health facilities
 - 19% reported to have been accused of something in the village; 6% in their households
- Theft of property and/or property grabbing
- Isolation from development and other activities
 - 40% reported to have been rejected from development work such as road maintenance

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Deaths and accusations of witchcraft

- Most longitudinal and short-term deaths are still being associated with witchcraft and the elderly are blamed (7% of the 151 females and 6% of the 99 males in the study)
- "They should not see a cat near your house, they say your fellow wizards have come to visit you and if they see you chasing them they say you are talking to your friends in your language"
- "if you go visiting a person who is very sick, they say you have come to finish off the person"
- Stigma and perceptions surrounding illnesses may be delaying proper treatment

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Poverty is real among the elderly manifested in:
 - Ill-health
 - Irregular meal consumption patterns and food insecurity
 - Low cash flow
 - Poor housing conditions
- HIV and AIDS exacerbating the already fragile livelihoods
- Households headed by females generally perform poorly on socio-economic issues whereas those with elderly men only perform poorly on sanitation and food consumption

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SUMMARY CONT'D

- The incidence of surrogate parenting is increasing --- most of the orphans requiring >10 years of support before they complete secondary education
 - Support for school fees could be considered for orphans beyond the free primary education
- Social support not being accessed by all the elderly
- Cases of abuse and attaching illnesses and/or deaths in households and in the village to witchcraft are still prevalent and these may be delaying proper treatment

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