

Barriers and Benefits in Elderly Forensic Psychiatric Care in Iraq: A Descriptive Study

Barriers and
Benefits in
Elderly Forensic
Psychiatric Care

Fatema Hasan Mohammad¹, Lara Kefah Noori² and Nasir Muwfaq Younis³

ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the Barriers and Benefits of providing elderly forensic mental health care in Iraq.

Study Design: Descriptive study design through using (Non probability) convenience sampling.

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted at the center of the city of Mosul is College of Nursing, University of Mosul, from 1 April to 28 April 2025.

Methods: Was conducted to determine the Barriers and Benefits in Elderly Forensic Psychiatric Care in Iraq, from 1 April to 28 April 2024. While the number of sample used in this study was (106) people, including (74) female and (32) male. Data analysis is done with the "Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for Windows (Version 26)".

Results: This result indicates that the majority of the study sample consisted of individuals 53 years older; 71.69% of the sample of 61 and 70; the percentage of female participants was higher than that of male participants by 69.81%; 75.47% of the sample was married; and 86.79% of the sample had chronic illnesses. Ultimately, a sizable portion (64.15%) had some form of mental illness.

Conclusion: This investigation found that the benefits of the obstacles related to forensic psychological care were less than expected, while the benefits of forensic mental health care were clearly and naturally acceptable, especially for the elderly.

Key Words: Barriers, Benefits, Elderly, Forensic, Psychiatric Care.

Citation of article: Mohammad FH, Noori LK, Younis NM. Barriers and Benefits in Elderly Forensic Psychiatric Care in Iraq: A Descriptive Study. Med Forum 2026;37(7):32-35. doi:10.60110/medforum.370706.

INTRODUCTION

Elderly people have unique physical and mental health challenges in addition to being more susceptible to mental disorders (MDs). Globally, anxiety disorders (4%), depression (7%), dementia (5%–8%), and drug abuse (1%–2%) are the most common medical conditions among the elderly. Furthermore, elderly people account for 25% of suicide-related deaths^{1,2}. This percentage will most likely increase as individuals live longer and the percentage of seniors increases^{3,4}. Examining the requirements, encounters, and results of these elderly forensic patients is crucial. This is due to the fact that persons with severe mental illnesses and those who were imprisoned in the criminal justice system ten years prior may encounter the age-related

health needs of those who are generally regarded as "older" in the general persons, which is generally about 60 years old⁵. Numerous factors contribute to this discrepancy, including limited access to healthcare, chronic illnesses that last a lifetime, histories of substance abuse, and social disadvantages like lack of opportunity for education and employment. People with mental illnesses who, because of their psychiatric symptoms, may be a danger to themselves or others can receive specialized or intensive treatment from secure forensic mental health services located throughout the world. In the United Kingdom, the age range of patients receiving secure forensic mental health treatment has increased during the last ten years. According to a study, 8% of patients in a UK high-security hospital were over 50. 21% of patients over 50 in 2018 are considered high-security⁶. The number of older patients in forensic psychiatric care, both long-term and recently admitted, has increased as a result of changes in the legal system such as a rise in lifetime paragraphs, increased prosecution of past offenses, particularly sexual offenses, and demographic trends such as improved life beliefs^{7,8}. Global population aging has been a result of both decreased mortality and enhanced public health interventions^{9,10}. Senior citizens have multiplied drastically on an international level, with more retired individuals alive than at any other time in history¹¹. Between 2020 and 2050, the share of adults over 60 in the world will nearly double, from 14% to

¹. Department of Assist. Lect. CHN / Assist. Lect. Psychiatric Nursing³ / Prof. CHN³, Department of Clinical Sciences/ College of Nursing, University of Mosul, Nineveh, Iraq.

Correspondence: Nasir Muwfaq Younis, Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Nursing, University of Mosul, Nineveh, Iraq.

Contact No: 009647703000601

Email: nasir.muwfaq@uomosul.edu.iq

Received: February, 2026

Reviewed: March-April, 2026

Accepted: May, 2026

31%¹². The yearly numerical report from the nation's Ministry of Health states that the amount of Iraqi citizens sixty years of age or older rose from 5.8% in 2006 to 5% in 2016. By 2050, the ratio is expected to rise to 8.8%¹³. The aim of the article to identify the Barriers and Benefits in Elderly Forensic Psychiatric Care in Iraq.

METHODS

Descriptive study design through using (Non probability). Researchers used the perceived barriers and benefits of forensic psychological care for the elderly in Iraq and Mosul in particular to identify the most important strengths, weaknesses or obstacles in psychological care for the elderly. The study was applied in the center of the city of Mosul from within the nursing home in the city of Mosul, which includes males and females who are in the same home for the purpose of identifying the obstacles and benefits they face from the psychological and forensic aspect. The number of participants was all residents of the nursing home, which was 106 people, including 32 males and 76 females. The data collection period was approximately 28 days. The sample size was calculated using a single proportion formula, a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error. Most of the elderly residents in nursing homes, numbering 58 people, were excluded from the study, with approximately 4 people being unable to speak and communicate with the researchers. Thus, the sample size of the participants is considered to be more than 90% of the total number in the nursing home. The period of the study started from

1 April to 28 April 2025. While the number of sample used in this study was (106) people, including (74) female and (32) male. (Non probability) convenience Sampling was conducted to determine the Barriers and Benefits in Elderly Forensic Psychiatric Care in Iraq. A questionnaire was designed and presented to a group of experts in the medical, nursing, statistical, and language specializations. This questionnaire included three main aspects. The first was related to the demographic aspects of the elderly person (age, gender, Marital status, chronic diseases, and psychological diseases). The second aspect was related to the obstacles facing the elderly from a legal psychological perspective, and the third aspect was the benefits psychologically facing the elderly person. The questionnaire takes 45 to 50 minutes to complete for each person. The "Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for Windows (Version 26)" is used to statistic data.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 reveals that the majority of study participants were 53 years old, that the majority of the sample was between 61 and 70 years old, 71.69%, and that the percentage of female participants was greater than that of male participants 69.81%, that 75.47% of the sample was married, and 86.79% of the sample had chronic diseases. Ultimately, a sizable portion (64.15%) had some form of mental illness. Table 2 shows that the perceived barriers were minimal between elderly. Table 3 shows that the perceived benefits were good and acceptance between old age.

Table No.1: Distribution of Demographical Variables of sample (106)

Variables	No.	Frequency (%)	Mean +SD
(A):Age			
50 – 60 Years	24	22.64%	Mean (67.1) SD (1.72)
61 – 70 Years	76	71.69%	
70 years and more	6	5.66%	
(B):Sex			
Male	32	30.18%	
Female	74	69.81%	
(C): Marital status			
Married	80	75.47%	
Single	10	9.43%	
Divorced	16	15.09%	
(D): You suffer from chronic diseases			
Yes	92	86.79%	
No	14	13.21%	
(E): You suffer from psychological illnesses			
Yes	68	64.15%	
No	38	35.85%	
Total	106	100%	

Table No.2: Perceived Barriers of total Scores for Scales

Perceived Barriers	Mean	SD	Range	Range Possible
	26.87	6.43	14-56	28-56

Table No.3: Perceived Benefits total Scores for Scales

Perceived Benefits	Mean	SD	Range	Range Possible
	81.03	10.53	28-112	56-112

DISCUSSION

This study looked into the procedures used to determine the advantages and obstacles of providing elderly forensic mental health care in Iraq. This study proved that in order to meet the complicated requirements of these patients and promote progress toward better or greater standards of life and general wellness, a comprehensive and multi-modal level of support is required. Thirteen workers who have worked working with this demographic were interviewed for the study. The needs of every patient must be unique, and assistance offered has to be customized to deal with issues which plant up as the patient receives more mature¹⁴. Elderly patients who have forensic mental health challenges need the assistance of a team of professionals that can offer focused medical attention and therapy. Since psychological disorders and cognitive decline can get worse as people age, it is critical to address these issues. In addition, it is necessary to assess and monitor physical health and the general physical decline associated with aging, including frailty, mobility, seeing, and perception. suitable medical attention and therapy from a range of places is additionally required. Treatment must be suitable for their ages and meaningful to patients in order for them to cooperate with it and eventually profit compared to it ^{15,16}. Through the results of the second and third tables, it was shown that the perceived obstacles related to forensic mental health care were few and less than the normal score¹⁷. The main reason is the association of the obstacles with the cost of treatments, as psychiatric medications require a high cost. On the contrary, in the perceived benefit, there was commitment to taking the treatments and following up. Doctors for the elderly in nursing homes and medical clinics. The study also identified difficulties and barriers that older forensic behavioral health patients face. Many things were found to be missing, including activities suitable for older legal mental health patients and a lack of specialized units that could serve the needs of "older," "forensic," and "mental health" patients. It was also found that the older legal mental health patients' marginalization from care planning and service delivery constituted a major barrier to appreciate advancement. In line with

(WHO) estimates, the prevalence of depression in older adults typically ranges from 10% to 20%, depending on cultural context. The Iraqi Mental Health Survey (IMHS), which is consistent with the current study, revealed a high lifetime prevalence of depressive episodes among adults 60 years of age and older, reaching 13.15% for males and 13.55% for females¹⁸.

CONCLUSION

The inquiry found that the benefits of the obstacles related to forensic psychological care were less than expected, while the benefits of forensic mental health care were clearly and naturally acceptable, especially for the elderly.

Recommendations: The study recommend that there be special psychological and social programs for those working with the elderly, such as doctors, nurses, and social researchers, in order to deal with them properly and positively. One of the most important limitations of the study is the lack of proper time management for the elderly, such as sleeping and eating, and this affects study in general and their lifestyle in particular.

Author's Contribution:

Concept & Design or acquisition of analysis or interpretation of data:	Fatema Hasan Mohammad Lara Kefah Noori
Drafting or Revising Critically:	Lara Kefah Noori, Nasir Muwfaq Younis
Final Approval of version:	All the above authors
Agreement to accountable for all aspects of work:	All the above authors

Conflict of Interest: The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

Source of Funding: None

Ethical Approval: No. 334 Dated 02.02.2025

REFERENCES

- Sharma G, Morishetty SK. Common mental and physical health issues with elderly: a narrative review. *ASEAN J Psychiatr* 2022;23(1):1-1.
- Di Lorito C, Völlm B, Denning T. Ageing patients in forensic psychiatric settings: A review of the literature. *Int J Geriatric Psychiatr* 2018; 33(12):1548-55.
- Coid J, Fazel S, Kahtan N. Elderly patients admitted to secure forensic psychiatry services. *The J Forensic Psychiatr* 2002;13(2):416-27.
- Di Lorito C. Long-stay and ageing. *Long-Term Forensic Psychiatric Care: Clinical, Ethical and Legal Challenges* 2019:181-98.
- Majeed HM, Hassan AF, Jasim AH, Al-Ganmi AH. Protective health behaviors among critical care nurses concerning pressure ulcer prevention for hospitalized patients at Baghdad teaching

- hospitals. *Al-Rafidain J Med Sciences* (ISSN 2789-3219) 2023;5(5):205-10.
6. Merkt H, Haesen S, Meyer L, Kressig RW, Elger BS, Wangmo T. Defining an age cut-off for older offenders: a systematic review of literature. *Int J Prisoner Health* 2020;16(2):95-116.
 7. Abed OA, Majeed HM. Evaluation of patients' knowledge concerning contributing factors and early detection of prostate cancer. *J Ind Acad Forensic Med* 2024;46(1 Suppl):207-10.
 8. Natarajan M, Mulvana S. New horizons: Forensic mental health services for older people. *BJ Psych Advances* 2017;23(1):44-53.
 9. Gianfredi V, Nucci D, Pennisi F, Maggi S, Veronese N, Soysal P. Aging, longevity, and healthy aging: the public health approach. *Aging Clinical and Experimental Res* 2025;37(1):125.
 10. Sharma B, Yadav B, Kumar S, Bumbrah GS, Sharma A. Forensic Comparison of Acoustic Voice Samples Recorded in Different Mobile Phone Devices: A Preliminary Study. *J Forensic Science Med* 2025;11(1):11-6.
 11. Ayed AY, Younis NM, Ahmed MM. Teachers' knowledge about communicable disease control at primary schools in Mosul City: A cross-sectional study. *Int J Academic Med* 2024;10(2):75-9.
 12. Prabha MA, Nesaraj AS, Arunkumar M. Forensic Analysis and Removal of Date-Rape Drug Present in the Spiked Drinks. *J Forensic Science and Med* 2024;10(4):267-73.
 13. Al-Sammak NI, Atiyah OH, Hussein M, Mohamed M, Mohamed M, Ahmed M, et al. Impacts of Social Media on Psychological, Social and Educational Aspects of Life. *Annals of the College Med Mosul* 2024;46(1):49-0.
 14. Ayed AY, Younis NM, Ahmed MM. Comparison of infection severity of vaccinated and unvaccinated health workers with Corona Virus: A cohort study. *J Educ Health Promotion* 2023; (1):336.
 15. Younis NM. Evaluation the health lifestyle of kindergarten students at Mosul city, Iraq. *Int J Med Toxicol Legal Med* 2023;26(1and2):148-52.
 16. Raoof RM. Evaluation of Anatomy Multiple Choice Questions for First and Second-year Students in the College of Medicine, University of Mosul. *Annals College Med Mosul* 2024; 46(1):128-0.
 17. Ibrahim AA, Ai-Lami F, Al-Rudainy R, Khader YS. Mental disorders among elderly people in Baghdad, Iraq, 2017. *INQUIRY: The J Health Care Organization, Provision, and Financing* 2019; 56:0046958019845960.
 18. Di Lorito C, Voellm B, Denning T. The individual experience of ageing prisoners: systematic review and meta-synthesis through a Good Lives Model framework. *Int J Geriatric Psychiatri* 2018; 33(2):252-62.