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UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS OF INDIAN URBAN OLDER WOMEN REGARDING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

There is significant rise in the population of older women in India. Supporting their healthy ageing becomes a priority. Social participation is a significant causal factor of healthy ageing. Perception regarding social participation is essential determinant of social participation. This study thus explored the perceptions of Indian urban older women regarding social participation. The study adopted a qualitative approach using framework analysis approach and focus group discussion (FGD) method. Five FGDs were conducted with 4 to 6 participants in each group and a total of 23 older women (above 60 years) were recruited. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis and three themes were identified: *older women's perspectives regarding social participation, nature of social participation, and factors influencing social participation*. The results highlighted that older women value social participation and see many benefits from it. They participate in several social activities, in-person or virtually, with familiar and diverse people. Home obligations, advancing age, health, phone, and Covid-19 were identified as barriers while family, previous experiences, and transportation services were identified as facilitators of social participation. The implications of this study suggest that social participation is essential in Indian context.