

Introduction: CSO conducted Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health Survey (I-WISH) in July 2011 in cooperation with KRSO, ministry of health, ministry of woman affairs and other relevant public bodies, with support from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Pan Arab Population and Family Health Project (PAPFAM), as well as WHO, UN-Woman, UNICEF and UNDP. This survey is the first survey that addresses women issues on the basis of life cycle approach (adolescence, reproductive, after productive and elderly stages) from empowerment, health, reproductive health, violence against women and other relevant social and health dimensions to establish a comprehensive database on Iraqi woman issues across life cycle. The innovation in I-WISH is the comprehensive approach beyond reproductive role of women, and the involvement of new modules on female adolescent and a module on man knowledge, perception and behavior in regard to women issues. The survey is based on a cluster multi-stage sample of 10,620 households derived from the listing frame of population census. Following is the main findings on **"Elderly women in Iraq"**

Demographic profile for women 55 years and above: Population projections according to CSO reveal that the total number of women 55 years and above in Iraq is estimated to about one million women; which comprise around 6.8 percent of total women in Iraq, and about 53 percent of total elderly population aged 55 years and above. The results of I-WISH survey also showed that 43.3 percent of these women are widowed, 3.3 percent are unmarried and 23.1 percent are heads of households. The results also showed that elderly women live in households with an average of 6.5 members, amongst 13.4 percent live in households with average household size totaled to less than 3 persons. About 76.2 percent of these women live in urban areas and 23.8 percent live in rural areas. The results of the survey reveal also that 72.4 percent of elderly women are illiterate and only 5.4 percent of them have a diploma degree or higher.



Assessment of general situation: Elderly women in Iraq are gone through fold pressure; on one hand the need to be more dependent due to their increasing needs for health and social care; but on the other hand they are requested to take care of other members especially disabled, sick and weak family members. About 35 percent of these women reported that their physical conditions are either bad or very bad and there are no differences in women situation in Kurdistan and other governorates of Iraq. About 11 percent of these women reported that they are unhappy with their life in general of whom 6.4 percent in Kurdistan and 11.4 percent in other governorates. Furthermore, 12.9 percent take care of disabled, sick or week members of the household, amongst 46.5 percent needed help in this task but couldn't find it.

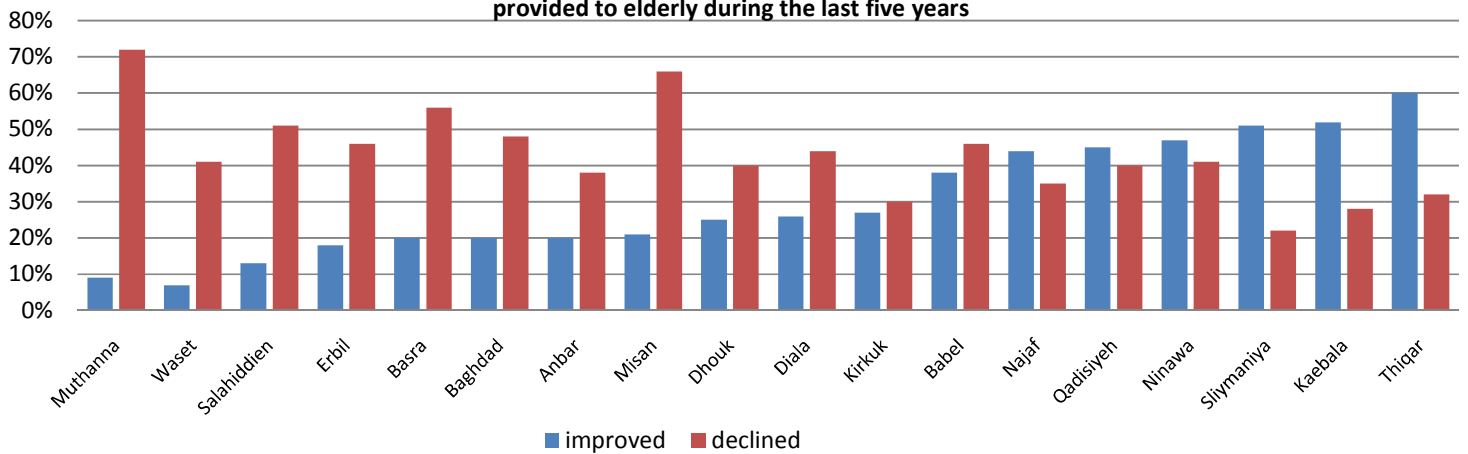


The Need for help in daily activities: the results of the survey showed that 31.1 percent of the women needed help in eating, drinking, wearing clothes, moving around and using the bathroom in the year that preceded the survey. The main source of this help came from family members (88.8%), while 0.5 percent receive help from government health care workers. Family forms the main safety net for elderly women in Iraq; about 83 percent of women 55+ reported that family members such as sons, daughters, grandsons and others provided the with help regularly when needed. Furthermore, about 66.9 percent provided financial and material assistance versus about 71.2 percent provided health care, and 68.4 percent provided company when needed.



Health Care Services: About 52.1 percent of women 55+ needed health care during the month preceded the survey. About 60 percent of these women got it from government health facilities, of whom 30 percent reported that quality of service was good, while 18.7 percent reported that quality of the service was bad. About 58.6 percent found hard time trying to get government health care. This difficulty of finding government health care increases in other governorates (60.9%) compared with Kurdistan region (48.0%). Those who faced difficulties reported different reasons for that; due to inability to reach to the service (40.6%), or due to lack of enough money to get help (47.7%), and 8.8 percent could not find anyone to take them to the health facility. There is a general believe that health care is improving in Iraq although there are differences by environment and region.

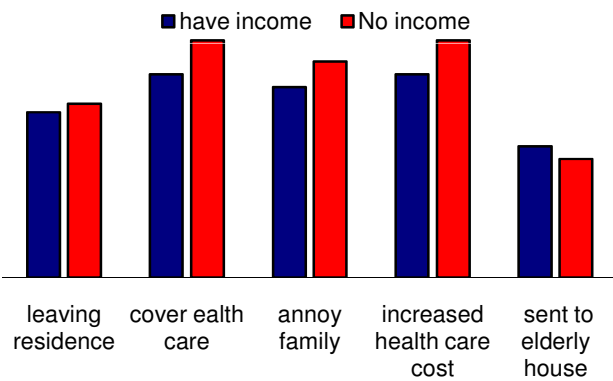
Percentage of women 55+ by perception regarding the trend of the quality of the government health services provided to elderly during the last five years



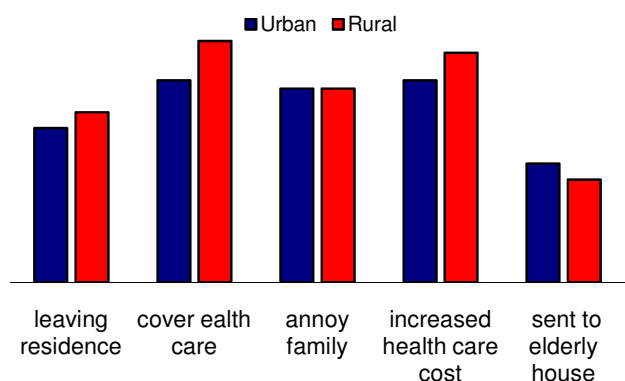
Covering the cost of health care: About 40.3 percent of women 55+ faced difficulties to cover the cost of health care. It is worth noting that this percentage is higher in Kurdistan region (44.2%) compared with other Iraqi governorates (39.4%). Only 14.3 percent of women 55+ who suffer from health situation that requires medical treatment or medication that government or NGOs cover all/part of the required cost.

Concerns about future: 64.5 percent of elderly women 55+ were concerned about the future for different reasons. About 40.6 percent reported to be concerned due to the likelihood of leaving her usual residence due to health reasons. Around 53.5 percent were worried not to have enough money for long term health care, 49.3 percent were concerned to have to become a burden on her family, 53 percent were concerned of the increasing cost of health care and not having enough money to cover it, and 29.9 percent were afraid to go to elderly house.

Percentage of women 55+ by income and future concerns



Percentage of women 55+ by locality type and future concerns



Violence: The results of the survey showed that 11.3 percent of women 55 years and above in Iraq have experience some kind of verbal violence by family members during the year preceded the survey. About 12.2 percent were not allowed to move freely, 12.9 percent have been told that they cause burden on the family, and 17.1 percent were left alone. Women who had income were less exposed to violence, 8.4 percent of them were exposed to verbal violence and 11.2 percent were not allowed to move freely, 11.7 percent were told they are a burden on the family, and 16.9 percent were left alone.

