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# Socio-economic Consequences of Loss of Functional Independence in the Elder in Sub-Saharan Africa

**Topic:** Miscellaneous

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## BACKGROUND

The loss of functional independence in the elderly is becoming more frequent due to demographic changes and poses significant socioeconomic challenges. However, this issue is still under explored in developing countries, particularly in Africa. This study aims to describe the clinical characteristics of functional independence loss and its socioeconomic impact.

## METHODS

This cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study was conducted at the Geriatrics Department of CHNU Fann, with data collected retrospectively and prospectively. Patients aged 65 and older, who had lost functional independence were included, while unusable files were excluded. Caregiver burden was assessed using the Zarit scale, functional independence with the Katz scale, and mood with the mini-Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS).

## RESULTS

The study included 622 patients with a mean age of 78,98 years (range: 65-102 years), and a sex ratio of 0.84. The prevalence of functional independence loss was 45.17%. Among these, 72.24% had heavy dependence, especially in hospitalized patients (66.90%). Acute functional decline was most common in hospitalized patients (63.19%). Comorbidities were present in 33.6% of patients, and 14.4% were on multiple medications. The main causes of independence loss were stoke, respiratory infections, cognitive disorders and peripheral artery disease (PAD). Depression was found in 12.09% of patients. Half of the caregivers reported a light to moderate burden, with 63.6% needing additional support. In Cases of high dependency, caregivers often reported a light burden, and severe caregiver burden was correlated with severe patient dependence.

## CONCLUSION

The loss of functional independence is a significant concern for the elderly in Africa, with multiple medical, psychological and social factors contributing. It significantly impacts the quality of life of both patients and caregivers. Comprehensive strategies are needed to manage severe functional decline and alleviate caregiver burden

**Statement of Disclosures**

None

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