

QUALITY OF LIFE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE REGARDING STRESS AND ITS COPING MECHANISMS

Mrs. Gauthami H

Assistant professor, R V College of Nursing Bangalore
Email: gauthamih.rvcn@rvei.edu.in Mobile: 9035337411

ABSTRACT

Stress influences every part of the body. It has a powerful effect on mind & various systems of our body. It is an inherent part of the life of every individual, right from school going kids to retirement. It is highly impossible for an individual to live without undergoing stress. It is one of the leading causes of death including the heart diseases, hypertension, cancer, accidents & suicide. The aim of this study is to assess the quality of life of elderly with stress & its coping mechanisms. In this study quantitative research approach was adopted. Employing the convenient sampling technique, the data was obtained from elderly using the structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics & interpreted. The findings revealed that majority of elderly were mildly stressed & very few were severely stressed. The study also concluded that there is no significant association between demographic variables and QOL of elderly.

Keywords: *Quality of life, elderly, stress, coping mechanisms*

Introduction

“Age is a question of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter”, Ageing is a universal & inevitable change, which takes place even with the best of nutrition & health care. It is normal process of time related change that occurs throughout life. Ageing involves all aspects of organisms and is largely characterized by a decline in functional efficiency & decreased capability to compensate and recover from stress. Old age....is also the time when a kind of vacuum is created as person is separated from their loved ones and the rest of family members. There is no concrete work schedule to follow & you start feeling unwanted. When all the young members of the family are busy in their discourses of life, you lack love and attention needed. All these factors contribute in stressing out. When people can manage stress, the negative tendencies fall apart and when this happens, relief is the natural outcome.

Stress varies in degrees from individual to individual. So, the stress relief measures cannot be the same for all. The response for any particular situation varies.

Sometimes a happy event may also cause tremendous stress.

Some of the other concepts which are linked to the word stress are: -

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Exhaustion
- Frustration
- Despair
- Overwork
- Confusion.

Coping is the natural component of stress following stress as butter follows bread. Coping is referred to as problem solving efforts made by individuals when the demands they face are highly relevant to their welfare & when these demands tax their adaptive resources. Coping can be problem focused that is when action is directed at dealing with the stressor or emotion focused that is when action is directed at dealing with the distress.

Materials & Methods

Questionnaire is used as a method of data collection for the present study. Before asking the questions, the purpose of it is explained to all the samples. Samples should be made comfortable and relaxed. Average time of 15-20minutes was taken for each client. The structured questionnaire consists of two parts: Part 1: - It deals with demographic data of old age people (Age, Religion, Gender, Marital status, Type of family, Income and Source of income.), Part 2: - It consists of stress scale regarding the signs and symptoms, factors affecting stress and its coping mechanisms.

Score Interpretation:

Score interpretation is based on the knowledge, score in terms of percentage. The geriatric stress is categorized into 3 groups depending upon the scores.

1-4: Mild Stress

5-9: Moderate stress

9 and above: Severe stress

Results

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Selected Socio Demographic Variables:

Table - 1

Sl. No.	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Age in years		
	a. 55 -60years	07	23%
	b. 61-65 years	11	37%
	c. 66 -70years	07	23%
	d. Above 70 years	05	17%
2.	Gender		
	a. Male	12	40%
	b. Female	18	60%
3.	Religion		
	a. Hindu	13	44%
	b. Muslim	9	30%
	c. Christian	8	26%
	d. Others	0	0%
4.	Marital Status		
	a. Married	12	40%
	b. Unmarried	0	0%
	c. Divorced/Separated	0	0%
	d. Widow/Widower	18	60%
5.	Type of family		
	a. Nuclear	25	83%
	b. Joint	05	17%

6.	Income		
	a. Less than 1lakh	11	37%
	b. 1-2 Lakhs	13	43%
	c. 2-3 Lakhs	06	20%
	d. 3 lakhs & above	0	0%
7.	Source of Income		
	a. Own property & Pension	18	60%
	b. Dependent on children	12	40%
	c. Dependent on relatives	0	0

Major Findings:

The findings of the present study were discussed under demographic variables and levels of the knowledge.

1. The finding shows that, seven (23%) old age people are in the age group of 55-60 years, 11(37%) of them are in the age group of 61-65 years, seven (23%) are in the age group of 66-70 years and five (17%) are above 70 years.
2. With regard to Gender 12 (40%) peoples are males and 18 (60%) are females.
3. With regard to Religion, 13 (44%) samples are Hindu, 9 (30%) are Muslims, 8 (26%) are Christians.
4. With regard to marital status, the findings shows that 12(40%) samples are married and 18 (60%) are widow/widower.
5. With regard to Type of family 25(83%) samples belong to nuclear family and five members (17%) belong to joint family.
6. With regard to Income 11(37%) people have less than one lakh, 13 (43%) samples have income between one and two lakhs income and 6 (20%) members have two to three lakhs income.
7. With regard to Source of income 18 (60%) depend on own property and pension and 12 (40%) are dependent on relatives.
8. The total stress scale score is 10 and above, score 1-4 indicates mild stress, 5-9 indicates moderate stress, 10 and above indicates severe stress level.

Finding show that out of 30 elderly people, seven (61.25) are mildly stressed, 20(37.50%) are moderately stressed and three (1.25%) are severely stressed

Association between demographic variables and the level of knowledge on Quality of life of old age:

The data regarding the association between demographic variables and knowledge score were analyzed. The chi-square result shows that there is no significant association between demographic variables and knowledge on Quality of life of elderly people; hence the Null hypothesis H_0 is accepted.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that majority of elderly were mildly stressed & very few were severely stressed. The study also concluded that there is no significant association between demographic variables and QOL of elderly.

Conflict of Interest: None

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