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A Descriptive Study to Assess the Level of Stress among Elderly People Residing at Old Age Homes, Uttar Pradesh (India)

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This study aimed to determine the level of stress among elderly people in selected old age homes and to find out various factors associated with it.

Materials & methods: A quantitative research approach with non-experimental survey design was used to conduct the study in selected Old age homes of Uttar Pradesh. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select 30 elders. A standardized Perceived Stress Scale containing 10 items were used for assessing the level of stress among the subjects. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25.

Results: The majority of 46.7% elders who reside at old age homes had moderate stress followed by 30% high level of stress and 23.3% low stress. There was an association found between the levels of stress among the elder people with their pattern of communication with the family members (x^2 =14.7, p=0.001).

Conclusion: The study concluded that the majority of elderly population in old age homes had moderate levels of stress. There is a need to organize any interventional packages to improve the physical and psychological health of elderly.

Keywords: - Stress, Elderly, Old age home

INTRODUCTION

Elder population constitutes one of the weakest sections of society. They are not only physically fragile but also lack in economic resources, self-esteem and social status.[1] Globally geriatric population was 382 million in 1980 which is hiked more than twice as large as 962 million in 2017 and it is expected to reach closely 2.1 billion by 2050.[2] In India, the elderly population was approximately about 104 million in 2011 according to the Population Census. It is estimated to grow to 173 million by 2026, suggests by the United Nations Population Fund and Help Age India.[3]

Elderly people are more prone to disease and disability, but they are physically different about the mental health of those whom they accept. Some mental problems within this period of life are more prevalent.[4] Some of the common physical and psychological problems are dependency, ill health, absence of social security, loss of social role and recognition and non-availability of opportunities for creative use of leisure.[5] Stress is a common problem among these. Stress and new diseases of civilization today is the growth of many physical and mental diseases.[6]

Yadav K et al (2016) concluded that the elderly people who live in old age homes suffer from stress and depression more than elderly who live in their home with their family and social support.[7]. At the present time most of the elderly people are isolated from families and they have feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and helplessness. Hence the researchers felt to conduct a survey on stress among elderly people residing at old age homes. Objectives of this study were to determine the level of stress among elderly people in selected old age homes in Uttar Pradesh, India and to find the association of

demographic variables with the level of stress.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative research approach with non-experimental survey design was used to conduct the study in selected Old age homes of Uttar Pradesh. The study setting was in Aastha Health Resort Old Age Home, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was adapted to select 30 elderly people from selected areas of Uttar Pradesh. A standardized Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used to assess the stress among elderly people. Ethical and Administrative permission was taken from authorities in concerned areas. The consent form was prepared for the study participant regarding their willingness to participate in the research study. Inclusion criteria: Elderly people aged 60-75 years, willing to participate in the study, available during the study period, and able to answer. Exclusion criteria: Persons with chronic physical & mental disability.

The research tool for data collection consists of two sections:

Section 1:- Demographic tool

It consists of age, gender, previous occupation, marital status, duration of stay and pattern of communication with the family members.

Section 2:- Perceived stress scale

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a standard stress assessment tool developed by Cohen, in 1983. It consists of 10 items; each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4 with a higher score signifying a higher level of stress. In these items 4, 5, 7, and 8 are in a reverse manner, their scoring pattern is in descending order like 4,3,2,1, 0 and the remaining items, the scoring pattern is like 0, 1, 2, 3, 4. The minimum score is 0 and maximum score is 40. The score was categorized as 0-13 is a low stress, 14-26 moderate stress and 27-40 high perceived stress. The tool was prepared in English and Hindi for better understanding. Content validity of the tool was determined by experts in the field of psychology, psychiatry and nursing. SPSS version 25 was used for Statistical analysis and P = 0.05 was considered as the level of significance.

RESULTS

The major results of the study were:-

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of subjects (*n*=30)

Demographic Variable	Frequency	%
Age (years)		
60-65	14	46.7
66-70	11	36.7
71-75	5	16.7
Gender		
Male	18	60
Female	12	40
Education		
Literate	8	26.7
Illiterate	22	73.3
Previous Occupation		
Farmer	9	30
Retired	5	16.7
Unemployed	12	40
Other	4	13.3
Marital status		
Married	9	30
Unmarried	7	23.3
Widow/Widower	14	46.7
Duration of stay		
≤ 3 years	19	63.3
>3 years	11	36.7
Pattern of communication with the family members		
Satisfied	9	30
Unsatisfied	21	70

The table 1 shows that frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables, the majority of the elders 46.7% were in the age group of 60 to 65, 60% were males, 73.3% were illiterate, 40% were unemployed, 46.7% were widow/widower, majority 63.3% of elders had less than 3years for their duration of stay at old age homes and a majority 70% were unsatisfied with the pattern of communication with the family members.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of gradation of stress level among elderly

Stress score	Frequency	%
Low stress	7	23.3
Moderate stress	14	46.7
High stress	9	30

The table 2 exhibits that frequency and percentage distribution of gradation of stress level among elderly, the majority of 46.7% elders had moderate stress followed

by 30% high level of stress and 23.3% low stress.

The table 3 shows the summary statistics of overall stress score among elders which consists of mean 20, median 18, mode 16, standard deviation 7.6, range 24, minimum score 9, maximum score 33 and sum 600.

Table 3: Summary Statistics	
Mean	20
Median	18
Mode	16
Std. Deviation	7.6
Range	24
Minimum	9
Maximum	33
Sum	600

Table 4: Association between stress level with their demographic variables

Demographic data	Levels of stress			x^2	*df*	*p*
	Low	Moderate	High			
Age (years)				6.5	4	0.17
60-65	4	7	3			
66-70	2	3	6			
71-75	1	4	0			
Gender				2.9	2	0.24
Male	6	8	4			
Female	1	6	5			
Education				1.7	2	0.43
Literate	2	5	1			
Illiterate	5	9	8			
Previous Occupation				4.6	6	0.59
Farmer	1	6	2			
Retired	1	3	1			
Unemployed	3	4	5			
Other	2	1	1			
Marital status				7.4	4	0.11
Married	1	4	4			
Unmarried	4	3	0			
Widow/Widower	2	7	5			
Duration of stay				1.7	2	0.43
≤ 3 years	3	10	6			
>3 years	4	4	3			
Pattern of communication with the family members				14.7	2	0.001**
Satisfied	6	3	0			
Unsatisfied	1	11	9			

***Significant (p<0.01)*

Table 4 illustrates that Chi-square value in stress score with the selected demographic variable pattern of communication with the family members (x^2 =14.7, p=0.001) was significant and other variables were not significant (p>0.05). Thus it can be concluded that there is an association between stress levels with a pattern of communication with the family members.

DISCUSSION

The present study found that the most of elders 46.7% who reside at old age homes had moderate stress followed by 30% high level of stress and 23.3% low stress. These results were supported by Panigrahi S et al (2015) which found that the most of the elders (86.66%) residing in selected old age home had moderate stress whereas similar percentage (6.66%) of them had mild and severe stress respectively.[8]

The present study found that there was an association between the levels of stress among the elder people with their pattern of communication with the family members. In contrary, Jeyanthi MY (2017) study found that there was no association between the stress of an elderly person with selected demographic variables.[9]

Implications and Recommendation

This study benefits many reputed organizations to conduct various awareness programs, workshops, seminars etc. for preparing health workers, counselors and other significant others to contribute to the sound mental health of the older populations by reducing their stress. A similar study can be replicated on a large scale and for a

longer period for more reliability and effectiveness. Experimental research can be done in future studies.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the majority of elderly population in old age homes had moderate levels of stress. There was a significant association found between the levels of stress among the elder people with their pattern of communication with the family members. The study is limited to the elderly people who are residing in selected old age homes in Uttar Pradesh, India and who are physically able to participate in the study. There is a need of the day to arrange any interventional packages to improve the physical and psychological health of elderly people residing at old age homes.

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