

Emotional Problems Among Elderly People in a Selected Old Age Home

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Ageing is a natural process that influences the individual, family and society in different ways. In old age, people seem to be depressed because of a variety of causes. They often find themselves deprived of the company of family members.

Worldwide, elderly people lead the World Health Organization's list of new cases of mental illness: 236 elderly people per 1,0,000 suffer from mental illness, compared to 93 per 1,0,000 for those aged 45 to 64 in the next younger group (WHO-2005).

Objectives

To assess the emotional problems among elderly people.

To determine the association between emotional problems and selected demographic variables of elderly people.

Research Methodology

A descriptive survey approach was carried out in a selected old age home at K.G.F., Kolar Dist.

A sample of 50 elderly people was selected using purposive sampling technique.

The following tools were used to collect data from the sample

1. Socio-demographic data sheet

2. General Health Questionnaire - 30 (Goldberg - 1972)

Description of the Tools

Socio-demographic data sheet - It comprises of data such as name, age, education, marital status, living status of the spouse, no. of family members, year of admission in old age home, family support, how often they are meeting family members and general health information.

General Health Questionnaire - This 30 item questionnaire was developed by Goldberg (1972). It consists of questions regarding social activities and psychological symptoms. It reveals indication of depression, agitation, apathy and anxiety that are suggestive of emotional disorders.

Test-retest reliability was found to be 0.77 and split half reliability at 0.92. The sensitivity and specificity of the GHQ-30 was 91.40% and 87% respectively.

The responses are recorded on a 4-point scale and scored as 0-0-1-1. A cut-of score of 6 was used in the study (Range = 0 to 30).

Method of Data Collection

A formal written permission was obtained from the secretary of the old age home. The data was collected during the month of Dec.2005.

Before collecting the data, informed consent was taken from the participants; on an average it took about 30 minutes to interview each subject. The collected data was analyzed by adopting descriptive and infer-

Results

Demographic variables of elderly people

Sl.No.	Demographic Variable	Number	Percentage
1.	Age		
	60-70 Years	27	54
	71-80 Years	16	32
	81 & above	07	14
2.	Sex		
	Male	34	68
	Female	16	32
3.	Living Status		
	Alive	15	30
	Dead	35	70
4.	Family support		
	Adequate	10	20
	Inadequate	40	80
5.	Health status		
	Healthy	23	46
	Minor health problems	09	18
	Major health problems	19	38

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List of emotional problems among elderly people

Sl.No.	Emotional Problems	Percentage
1.	Lost much sleep over night	50
2.	Been feeling unhappy and depressed	48
3.	Been having restless, disturbed night	46
4.	Found everything getting too much for him/her	32
5.	Found at times could not do anything because nerves were too bad	30
6.	Been getting scared or, panicky for no good reason	30
7.	Not able to enjoy day to day activities	28
8.	Not able to face up to the problems	24

Association between emotional problems and selected demographic variables of elderly people

Variable	X ² VALUE	P VALUE
Age	0.605	>0.05
Sex	5.83	0.02
Spouse living status	0.048	>0.05
Family support	0.98	>0.05
Health status	10.36	0.01

ential statistics.

Major Findings of the Study

- Most of the respondents (54%) were between the age group of 60-70 years, 32% between 71-80 years and remaining, 14% above 80 years.
- Most of the respondents (68%) were male and 32% of them were females.
- Majority (80%) of the subjects were having inadequate family support.
- 38% of the subjects were suffering with major health problems, 16% of them were having minor health problems while the remaining 46% were healthy.
- Nearly half of the sample (46%) was suffering from emotional problems.
- There was a significant association between sex and emotional problems of elderly people.
- There was significant association between emotional

problems and general health status of elderly people.

Recommendations

- Based on the study findings, it is recommended that
- The study can be replicated on a large sample from different old age homes.
- A comparative study can be conducted by comparing emotional problems among elderly people in old age homes and those staying with family.
- Experimental study can be conducted to analyze the effectiveness of psychological nursing interventions on reduction of emotional problems among elderly people.

Conclusion

Nurses and other health care professionals are responsible for caring of elderly people with mental and emotional health problems. Helping elders to

minimize emotional problems can be a challenging and rewarding experience for the nurse.

Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old by deserting their ideals. You are as young as your self confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope and as old as your despair.

Sources

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