

“A Study On Loneliness & Fear Of Death Among The Elderly Living In Old Age Homes And Those Living In Family Settings In Vijayawada”.

P. Srinivas
Lecturer in Psychology,
SRR & CVR Govt. Degree College,
Vijayawada.

Abstract:

Loneliness and Death anxiety are very common among the elderly. It is an obvious truth that very few elders manage to cope with experience of death without bearing a Significant Psychological burden. Present study is an attempt to identify and compare the levels of loneliness and fear of death among destitute and abandoned elderly living in old age homes to those living with their families. Study sample comprised of 60 participants of which 30 are elderly at old age homes and 30 lived within community. Both the groups had equal number of male and female. Finding indicates that death anxiety is present regardless of the type of stay of elderly. However the elderly at old age home exhibited higher levels of death anxiety and loneliness.

Key words: Loneliness, anxiety, fear, etc.,

Introduction:

Every human is aware that death is certain and inevitable. The elderly at old age homes are victims of psychological and emotional disturbances, there is no one to listen to their burdens they often experience loneliness in line with death anxiety.

One of the major impacts of globalization is breaking up of traditional family system. Another impact of the globalization is the increasing economical burden on the elderly especially the women and other. There is need to protect the human rights of the elderly and have gender just laws and policies to ensure adequate economic and social protection during disability and old age, especially where the aged lack adequate family support.

Objectives: 1) To study the differences in loneliness and fear of death among the elderly at old age homes and those living in communities.
2) To study relation between loneliness and fear of death among the elderly.

Hypothesis:

There is systematically no significant difference in mean loneliness levels across the group. There is systematically no significant difference in fear of death across the group. There is no significant relationship between the fear of death and loneliness.

Review of literature:

The Journals of Gerontology: Series B Vol.57 issue 4, 1st July, 2002 by Victor G. Cicirelli. Highlights that fear of death among elderly adults is not well understood. Although existing research is somewhat inconsistent. Over all the interpretation of existing findings is that fear of death declines over the years of middle adulthood but does not continue declining in old age.

Methodology:**Sample Description:**

All adults above 60 years of age in old age homes of Vijayawada are considered as study population. The group in old age homes is chosen through randomization techniques and the community group is selected by purposive sampling technique. Investigation will be carried out on groups of 40 elderly from old age home and 40 elderly living in the community. Each group has 20 male and 20 female. A list of old age homes in Vijayawada is collected and the participants are randomly chosen.

Date of Collection:

Data is collected personally from each respondent. A questionnaire and interview is initiated first to elicit more details and to understand the subject better.

Test used: The following self report measures are employed for the study.

The Collect - Lester's fear of death scale - The test has list of 28 values. Scores are obtained by summing up the 7 item sub scales. Higher scores indicate higher levels of death anxiety.

R - UCLA Loneliness Inventory:

It is a uni-dimensional scale of loneliness consisting of 20 items created by Russell and it's 4 point scale. The scores are obtained by reversing few scores and then summing up. Higher scores indicate higher degree of loneliness.

Statistical Techniques:

Hypothesis testing is carried out by adopting suitable statistical methods like the descriptive analysis in the form of mean, Standard Deviation and inferential analysis by using factorial ANOVA and Pearson's correlation test.

Results & Discussion:

Table-I.

Death Anxiety Inventory.

| Measure | <u>Elderly at Old age Home</u> | | <u>Elderly with Family settings</u> | |
|---------|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|------|
| | Mean | S D | Mean | S D |
| Male | 93.3 | 17.2 | 70.3 | 13.4 |
| Female | 114.3 | 20.6 | 88.6 | 17.1 |

From the above table the elderly at old age homes reported higher levels of feelings of fear of death irrespective of gender.

Table - II. **RUCLA Inventory**

| Measure | <u>Elderly at Old age Home</u> | | <u>Elderly with family settings</u> | |
|---------|--------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|------|
| | Mean | S D | Mean | S D |
| Male | 61.3 | 9.9 | 35.4 | 10.4 |
| Female | 70.4 | 4.5 | 48.4 | 12.6 |

From the above table elderly at old age homes have reported higher levels of feelings of loneliness irrespective of genders. It is apparent that females of each category have reported higher levels of loneliness compared to men.

Conclusion:

The general feelings of the single elderly living in the families had better position than that of elderly institutes. The existing condition of the elders living in the old age home was that they felt lonelier and had higher levels of death anxiety. Families should be closer to their elderly members and pay attention to the signs indicating that a senior's well being might be deteriorating.

Reference:

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