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“To identify the psychological problems and coping strategies of elderly women residing at selected old age home, Sri ganganagar, Rajasthan.”

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Due to the nature of the problem and the achievement of the research objectives a systematic discussion program has been used to identify problems.

Methodology: A simple randomized testing procedure was used to select 90 older women living in an old age home. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and differential statistics.

Results: Psychological problems according to the severity level revealed that majority (94.5%) of the elderly women had moderate degree of psychological problems. About 4.4% of the subjects experienced severe psychological problems and no subjects were found without any psychological problems.

Analysis of coping strategies used by the elderly women residing in the old age home showed that more number of subjects adopted unhealthy coping strategies (mean % = 53.13) compared to healthy coping strategies (mean % = 60.52).

Conclusion: Area wise analysis of coping strategies reveals that more than half of the subjects (53%) had moderate use of healthy coping strategies whereas 37.8% of them used “less” healthy coping strategies, 64.4% of the subjects had moderate use of unhealthy coping strategies whereas 30% of them used “more” unhealthy coping strategies. Results showed there is a significant negative correlation between psychological problems and coping strategies.

Keywords: assess; psychological problems; coping strategies; old age home; elderly women.

INTRODUCTION

Aging is a major health change, which includes physical and mental changes. Aging should be regarded as an inevitable natural phenomenon.¹

According to the 1991 census, India has 60 million elderly people, this is about 6.7% of the total population. There is an increase in the old people, i.e. 5.97% in 1971 and 6.32% in 1981 respectively. The percentage of elderly is much higher in rural than in urban areas.²

Our prehistoric ancestors may have had a life expectancy of 40 years, with an average life expectancy of 18 years. As civilization progressed, mortality rates remained high due to occasional starvation and general malnutrition.³

In 1980, Americans 65 years of age or older were 25.5 million. By 1996, these numbers had risen to 31.2 million, representing 12.6 percent of the population.⁴

In the United Kingdom the population has grown by 6.5% over the past three decades, however, from 55.9 million in 1971 to 59.6 million by mid-2003.⁵

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH: Descriptive design with survey approach.

SETTING OF THE STUDY: The study was conducted in a selected old age home, Sri Ganganagar.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY: The population of this study comprised of the elderly residing in the old age home during the period of data collection.

SAMPLE: Elderly women residing in the old age home during the period of data collection, those who met the inclusive criteria were the sample for study.

SAMPLE SIZE: 90 elderly women who are residing in the old age home.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: Simple random sampling technique.

TOOL FOR THE STUDY

Description of the tool

The structured interview schedule was designed in three parts, part I, part II and part III.

Part I Demographic Performa

This included 10 items of demographic variables.

Part II:

Part II consists of 30 items to assess the psychological problems of elderly women. Each item has three responses. Score is given as 'two', 'one', and 'zero' for the questions which possess negative meaning and vice versa for the positive questions. The highest score was 60 in this section.

Part III:

Part III consist of a tool which contains 25 items related to the coping strategies used for psychological problems by elderly women residing in old age home. Maximum score was 25 in this part.

RESULTS

PART I

Section A –Percentage Distribution of Demographic Variables

- 44% of subjects were from 60-69 years age group. The trend of data shows that, as age increases the number of elderly decreases with lowest number being in the age group of ≥ 90 which was 4%.
- more than half (53%) of the elderly women residing in old age home had a rural background and rest of them were from the urban area (47%).
- Educational status it is seen that highest percentage of the subjects was illiterate (40%). About 35% of them had primary education and 15% of them had high school education. The percentage of subjects with higher education was comparatively low i.e. 3% of them had P.U.C and 7% of them had graduation.
- The percentage distribution of sample according to the religion, Sikhs occupied the largest group with 90% followed by very few numbers of Hindus (6%) and Muslims (4%).
- The highest percentage (42%) of the sample was unmarried and around 23% of them were married. The sample consisted of widows and divorced were 30% and 5% respectively.
- Sample according to their number of children. It clearly reveals that more than half (55%) of them have no children. Percentage of the sample those who have three or more children were 30% and rest of them have one (5%) or two (10%) children.
- The occupation wise distribution shows that highest percentage (45%) of the subjects was house wives, only 5% were Govt. employees and 14% were private employees. Rest of them were unemployed (36%)
- Elderly women have nobody to take care in the family were more (82%). Few were staying in old age home because of poverty (8%), family migration (2%) and changes in the behavioral pattern of family members (8%).
- Distribution of the sample according to the duration of stay shows that highest percentage (70%) of elderly women had duration of stay of less than 10 years duration. Rest of them was in the group of 10-19 years duration (30%). Nobody was in the group of more than 20 years duration of stay.
- According to the source of information obtained about old age home before joining there. It shows that majority got information from the religious and voluntary agencies (70%). Rest of them got information regarding the old age home from others (30%).

PART-II

Analysis of psychological problems Section A

Distribution of subjects according to severity of psychological problems.

This section deals with the severity of the psychological problems of elderly women residing in old age home. Psychological problems were graded into nil, mild, moderate and severe based on the scores obtained by them.

Majority (93%) of the elderly women had moderate degree of psychological problems. Only a least percentage (2%) of them had mild psychological problems and remaining 5% of them experienced severe psychological problems.

Section B

Area wise distribution

Distribution of subjects according to the severity of depression

(61.1%) of them had moderate degree 28.3% had severe and 10.6% had mild degree of depression.

Distribution of subjects according to the severity of anxiety

(83.8%) of them had moderate anxiety and it is found that similar percentage (10.6%) of them were distributed in both severe and mild anxiety groups.

Distribution of subjects according to the severity of Loneliness

(70.2%) of the elderly women had moderate level of loneliness, very few of them had mild degree of loneliness (8.7%) and rest of them had severe degree of loneliness (21.1%).

Distribution of subjects according to the severity of somatic problems

Highest percentage of them had moderate degree of somatic problems (60.3%) and 29.7% of them had severe somatic problems and remaining 6.7% of them were experienced by mild degree of somatic complaints.

Distribution of subjects according to the severity of paranoid reactions

Highest percentage (55%) of the elderly women had mild degree of paranoid reactions and a least percentage (9.4%) of them had moderate degree of paranoid reactions and remaining 35.6% of them had no such problems.

Section C**Analysis of psychological problems of subjects in relation to demographic variables****Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and age**

38.8% subjects in the age group of 60-69 years had moderate psychological problems. 30% of them were in the age group of 70-79 years and 24.4% of them were in the age group of 80-89 years. In the age group of 60-69 years about 2.2% of subjects had severe psychological problems.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and previous place of residence

47.8% of the subjects, who had moderate degree of psychological problems, were from rural background and 46.7% of them were from urban area. Among the subjects from Urban and Rural area, equal percentage (2.2%) of them had experienced severe psychological problems.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and educational status

The results reveal that most of the subjects experienced moderate degree of psychological problems, among this, highest percentage (42.2%) was from illiterate group 31.1% of them had primary education, and about 14.4% of them had education up to high school level. Followed by very few of them had P.U.C (2.2%) and graduate level of education (4.4%). The subjects, who had severe degree of psychological problems (3.3%), were illiterates.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and religion

Majority of the subjects were Sikhs (87.7%), and they had moderate psychological problems, about 4.4% of them were Hindus and very few of them were Muslims (2.2%). It was observed that 4.4% of the Sikhs had severe psychological problems.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and marital status

Highest percentage (37.8%) was unmarried, 32.2% of them were widows, 20% of them were married and 4.4% were divorced. The percentage of married and unmarried subjects with severe degree of psychological

problems was 1.1% and 3.3% respectively.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and number of children

Large number of them possessed moderate degree of psychological problems. Among the all subjects, half of them (50%) with moderate degree of psychological problems had no children, 28.8% of them had three or more children, 8.8% of them had two children, and few of them (6.7%) had one child. About 3.3% of the subjects with severe psychological problems had no children.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and occupation before coming to the old age home

44.4% of them were housewives, 33.3% of them were unemployed, a few of them (4.4%) were employed in Govt. sector and about 12.2% of them were employed in private sector. The percentage of housewives and unemployed subjects with severe psychological problems was 1.1% and 2.2% respectively.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and reason for staying in the old age home

80% of the subjects with moderate degree of psychological problems had nobody to take care. About 7.7% of them were staying in old age home because of changes in the behavioral pattern of family members. A least percentage (4.4%) of them suffered from severe psychological problems had nobody to take care in the family.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and duration of the stay

(63.3%) of elderly women with moderate degree of psychological problems belonged to the duration of stay of less than 10 years and 31.1% had 10-19 years duration of stay. Among all the subjects, very few of them had severe psychological problems (4.4%) and they were equally distributed in both less than 10 years of duration and 10-19 years duration of stay.

Distribution of subjects according to the psychological problems and source of information regarding old age home before joining there

Among the subjects with moderate psychological problems, 70% of them got the information from religious and voluntary agencies, 25.6% of them got information from others. Few of them (3.3%) had severe psychological problems and they got information from religious and voluntary agencies.

Section-D

Item-wise analysis of psychological problems of elderly women

Distribution of subjects according to the problems related to depression

Large number of elderly women (44.4%) responded to the item "Feel sad without reason" 'most of the times'. It was found that 58.9% of them had the "feeling of worthlessness" 'sometimes'. A large number of them (60%) responded to the item "frequent mood changes" sometimes.

Distribution of subjects according to the problems related to anxiety

Highest percentage (52.2%) of the elderly women responded to the items "anxious about death" and "worried about future" most of the times. A large number of them (62.2%) were "get upset if criticized" some times, 55.6% of them responded to the item had "lose of temper over minor things" sometimes, and 55.6% of them

responded to the item “find difficult to make decisions” sometimes.

Distribution of subjects according to the problems related to loneliness

About 54.4% of the respondents responded to the item “happy with other inmates in the old age home” ‘not at all’. About 42.2% of them responded to the item “feel bored” most of the times, and 48.9% of them responded to the item “loss of interest in recreational activities” sometimes.

Distribution of subjects according to the problems related to somatic problems

That 53.3% of the elderly responded to the item “complaint of pain in different parts of the body” and 48.9% of them responded to the item “troubled by disturbed sleep” most of the times. From the table it is clear that more or less similar percentage (61.1%, 60%) of them were preoccupied with health problems and troubled by poor vision sometimes.

Distribution of subjects according to the problems related to paranoid reactions

47.8% of the subjects responded to the item “has trust in others” not at all. Very few of them experienced other problems related to paranoid reactions “Most of the times”. Only 23.3% of them responded to the item “Feel that somebody is talking bad about them” sometimes.

PART -III

Analysis of Coping Strategies

Mean, Standard Deviation and Mean Percentage Related To Coping Strategies

Adopted by Elderly Women

The mean of healthy coping strategies was 7.07% with standard deviation 2.95. The mean % was 54.38%. Whereas the mean of unhealthy coping strategies was 10.1 with standard deviation 2.72 and mean percentage was 62.56%.

Further, the mean and standard deviation were calculated to find out the total coping strategies used by the elderly women. It is observed that, the mean score was 17.13, which is from the maximum obtainable score of 29. The mean percentage was 59.07.

Section A: Item Wise Analysis of Coping Strategies Used by the Elderly Women Residing In the Old Age Home

Items are listed under two headings named as Healthy coping strategies and Unhealthy coping strategies.

Distribution of subjects according to the healthy coping strategies used by them

Majority of the elderly women (82.2%) were “Keep busy with prayer” and about 74.4% of the elderly women were “Trying to forget the painful experiences” 60% of them were “Discussing problems with the supervisors/ caretakers”.

Distribution of subjects according to the unhealthy coping strategies used by them

about 48.9% of the were responded “No” to the item “Not performing the activities of daily living”, It is found that 47.8% of the elderly responded yes to the items “Cursing family members” and “Getting irritated easily”, Followed by that 46.7% of them were “Not talking to anyone”

Section-B

Area-Wise Distribution of Subjects According To the Coping Strategies Used

Distribution of Subjects According To the Healthy Coping Strategies Used by Them

Highest percentage of the sample (51.1%) had moderate use of healthy coping strategies. About 37.8% of them used healthy coping strategies “less”, whereas compared to other group, few of them (22.2%) were, adopted “More’ healthy coping strategies.

Distribution of Subjects According To the Unhealthy Coping Strategies Used

Highest percentage of the elderly women (64.4%) had moderate use of unhealthy coping strategies. Very few of them (5.6%) adopted “less” unhealthy coping strategies. About 30% of them adopted “more” unhealthy coping strategies.

Distribution of Subjects According To the Coping Strategies Used

Highest percentage of them (60%) had moderate use of coping strategies. Very few of them (5.6%) used “less” coping strategies and rest (34.4%) of the elderly women adopted “more” coping strategies.

PART- III

Section A

Association between psychological problems and demographic variables

There is no significant relationship between psychological problems and demographic variables.

Section B

Association between the coping strategies and demographic variables

There is no significant association between the coping strategies and demographic variables.

Association between coping strategies and demographic variables

There is no significant relationship between coping strategies and demographic variables.

Section C

Correlation between the psychological problems and coping strategies of elderly women residing in the old age home

The correlation between the psychological problems and coping strategies was calculated by using spearman’s rank correlation formula.

Correlation between the psychological problems and coping strategies

The correlation coefficient $r = -0.299$, shows that there is no significant correlation between psychological problems and coping strategies of elderly women residing in the old age home.

CONCLUSION

Majority (93%) of the elderly women had moderate degree of psychological problems.

Area wise analysis of psychological problems reveal that majority (83.8%) of the subjects had moderate degree of anxiety. About 70.2% of them had moderate degree of loneliness. More or less similar percentage (61.1% and 60.3%) of moderate depression and somatic complaints were present in the subjects.

More number of elderly women (mean%=60.52) adopted healthy coping strategies to tackle the psychological

problems than unhealthy coping strategies (mean%=53.13).

No significant association was found in the psychological problems and coping strategies with demographic variables. A significant negative correlation was found between psychological problems and coping strategies.

SUMMARY

The present study was to assess the psychological problems and coping strategies of elderly residing in the old age home.

Findings show that highest percentage (44%) of the subjects belonged to the age group of 60-69 years and more than half of them (53%) were from rural back ground. With regard to the educational status, 40% of them were illiterates and majority (90%) was Sikhs among the sample. While considering the marital status of the subjects 42% of them were unmarried and 45% of them were housewives. Among the sample about 55% of them had no children and majority (82%) of the subjects had nobody to take care of them in the family. About 70% of the subjects belonged to the category whose period of stay in the institution was below 10 years.

The elderly women residing in the old age home had moderate degree of psychological problems. Majority of them used healthy and unhealthy coping strategies in moderate level.

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