



Psychological wellness among middle old people in Kerala

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Abstract

The research aimed to find the level of psychological wellness among middle old people in Kottayam district.. The sample size was 80, out of which 40 were males and the remaining 40 females. Out of these, the groups consist of 20 members each from Christian and Muslim in both males and the females. The scale used was Ryff's Psychological wellbeing for data collection and t-test was applied to analyze the data to study the difference in psychological wellness scores. Result shows that there is a significant difference in mental wellbeing with respect to gender, whereas insignificant difference is found among mean scores of Muslim and Christian subjects with respect to their mental wellbeing.

Key words: psychological Wellness, Gender, Religion, elderly, middle old, muslim, Christian

Introduction

Aging is a mental and biological phenomenon through which every organism has to pass through. It is a universal phenomenon and no society can escape from it. People in sixties are usually referred to as elderly. In this stage physical and mental ability reduces, psychological wellbeing and attitude towards life satisfaction are also affected. According to Sethi & Gupta (1980) aging is a normal stage of life, which comes to every person, Saraswati (1988) also revealed that old age is that stage of life in which wisdom is personified, the fruit of well-spent life is enjoyed and unquestionable power of authority and respect are obtained.

Researches indicate that old people are more prone to certain worst conditions. Elderly people lose their life partners, relatives, friends, and neighbours due to disease, divorce, death, geographical mobility, retirement etc..

Aging is also evidently considered as the emergence of several comorbid health concerns commonly referred to as the geriatric syndromes. Common conditions in old age includes the lose of hearing, cataracts, falls, urinary infections, abdominal problems, heart failures, back and neck pain, pulmonary diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure, unnecessary anxiety, fear of death, depression, and dementia .As people get older, they are more likely to experience multiple conditions at the same time for prolonged duration. They are usually the result of many underlying conditions and include physical weakness or disability, poor hearing, and vision, urinary incontinence, balance issues, oral health problems, heart disease, arthritis, falls, and even fatal diseases like cancer.

Positive mental health in old age comprises a feeling of having good emotional and psychological well-being. It affects the way they think and feels in their life. It also helps them to decide how to deal with the pressures of getting aged, how to deal with others and family members, and how they make decisions in life. Mental health is crucial at all stages of a person's life, especially when he grows older. Many older people are at risk of facing mental health problems at some point in their later years of life which does not mean that mental health problems are a mandatory normal part of aging. At times, important changes in life may make the elderly feel uncomfortable, depressed, and depressed. These changes may include the death of a loved one, retirement, or a sudden illness.

There are studies that show that older people feel satisfied and happy with their physical and mental health, even though they may have a number of comorbid problems. Most old age people will eventually adjust to the changes, and a few will find it difficult to adjust. Facing difficulty in the adjustment process can put them at risk for mental disorders such as depression, depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses. It is that stage of life in which people face various common problems via physical helplessness, economic insecurity, loneliness, increased pressure, lack of social support and health complaints etc., which directly affect the mental health as well as psychological wellness. These problems are not only the cause of mental illness and anxiety but also make it harder for the person to survive.

Psychological wellness is defined as people's evaluations of their own lives. Such evaluations can be both cognitive judgments, such as life satisfaction, and their emotional responses to events, such as feelings and positive emotions. It is a wide concept that includes different aspects of everyday experience. How people think, feel, behave, and take decisions etc. It is a subjective concept that commonly describes the mental state of the individual. Ryff et al. (1989) psychological wellbeing refer to the extent to which people feel that they have meaningful control over their life and their activities.

Psychological well-being may be defined by the proper functioning of the psychological system. Positive functioning comprises six dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, and dependency. Each of these dimensions contributes to mental health.

With the steep increase in the number of elderly people, there are numerous studies done and ongoing related to the physical, social, financial and psychological security of the old age cohorts.

Mughal & Fatma in 2015 pointed out that there was a significant difference in depression and psychological well-being with respect to both elderly males and females in India. Ranjan et al. (2013) conducted a study and they found that 47.33% of the elderly population had symptoms of depression, out

of which 70.42% had mild depression and 29.58% had severe levels of depression. His finding indicates that 57.8% had depression. Yuriko & Masumi (2003) found that psychological well-being decreases with the increase in age. Wong, Yoo & Stewart (2007) demonstrated that more social support significantly contributed to better overall psychological wellbeing in the old age. Narkhede, Likhar, & Rana (2012) studied that the elderly who lived with their spouses in old age homes had better psychological well-being compared to others who did not have their spouses with them. Tejal (2010) found that the institutionalized aged experience poor sense of psychological well-being than the non-institutionalized aged ones. in 2014,Chalise in his study revealed that many elderly living in old age homes are found to be suffering from depression. Results also uncovered that females of lower age group have greater psychological wellbeing than the males of higher age group. Yoon & Lee (2007) investigated psychological wellbeing among rural elderly. Results showed significant association between dimension of social support and psychological wellbeing.

Methodology

Statement of the Problem

To assess the level of psychological wellness among middle old people.

Objectives

1. To find the level of psychological wellness among male and female middle old people
2. To find the level of psychological wellness among Muslim and Christian Middle old people

Hypotheses

1. There would be a significant difference found between psychological wellness of male and female middle old people.
2. There would be a significant difference found between the psychological wellness of Muslim and Christian middle old people.

Variables

Independent Variable: - Gender and Religion

Dependent Variable: psychological wellness.

Sample

The study consists of 80 elderly people (above 74 years and below 85 years) who are not staying in old age homes, selected through a random sampling method and these 80 subjects were then equally divided into two groups (40 male and 40 female), these two groups were subdivided into two more groups on the basis of religion (20 Christians and 20 Muslims).

Measuring Tool used

Ryff's 42-item version of Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) was used for data collection. The scale consists of 42 items . The inventory consists of a series of statements reflecting mental well-being autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Out of the forty items, 20 items are considered negative and 22 items are regarded as positive. . The respondent's statement was noted on a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement. The scoring of positive items are 1, 2, 3,4,5,6 and negative items are scored in order 6, 5, 4,3,2, and 1 in descending order.

Results

The whole data obtained was using the Reff's Psychological wellbeing scale. The scores were assigned for different responses according to the item. t- test was applied to analyze the data. Mean and Standard deviation (S.D) value of each group was also calculated. Results are given intables.

chart -1

Gender wise Mean value, S.D, SEM and t- value of Psychological Wellness Scores

Area	Gender	No	Mean	S.D	SEM	df	t-value
Psychological wellness	Male	40	172.23	73.51	9.95		
	Female	40	134.56	50.42	8.31	68	2.85*

* =Significant at the 0.05 level

The above-given table shows the Mean, S.D, and SEM of Male and Female middle old participants with respect to their Psychological well-being. The obtained findings for Male, M= 172.23, S.D= 73.51, SEM=9.95 and for Females is , M= 134.56, S.D= 50.42, SEM=8.31 and t-value = 2.85.

Chart -2

Religion wise Mean Value, S.D, SEM and t- value of psychological wellness

Area	Religion	No	Mean	S. D	SEM	df	t-value
Psychological wellness	Muslim	40	162.43	56.13	9.86		
	Christian	40	142.34	51.36	8.96	59	.99 NS

Findings

The results of the study agreed that male middle old cohorts have a better psychological wellness than the females of the same category. The data analysis shows that the mean scores 172.23 of males are found to be more than mean scores of female subjects, 134.56 in the study. Significant difference was also found between the mean scores of psychological wellness in respect to gender, the obtained t- value (2.85) was found significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the first hypothesis proven. Therefore, it can be clearly mentioned that that middle old males enjoy a better life than female middle old ones as their psychological wellbeing is better than elderly females who participated in the study.

On the other hand, the research finding did not show any significant differences between the mean scores of Muslim and Christian subjects in respect to their psychological wellness. The obtained t- value .99 was found insignificant at 0.05 levels, and hence the second hypothesis can be rejected. However, it is clearly proven that the psychological wellness of Muslim participants is better than Christian subjects the mean scores of Muslim group is more than mean scores of the Christians.

Conclusion

This study examined the level of psychological wellness among elderly people. The primary objective was to find the level of psychological wellness among male and female elderly people, and secondary objective was to find the level of psychological wellness among Muslim and Christian middle old people. On applying the t-test, significant mean differences were found between the mean scores of male and female subjects in respect to their psychological wellness, whereas no significant differences were found between psychological wellness scores of Muslim and Christian participants. Therefore on the basis of this research findings, in a nutshell, it can be clearly said that gender is one of the key factors that affect the psychological wellness of the middle old people.

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