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## ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF STRESS AND STRESS COPING AMONG THE OLDER ADULTS IN OLD AGE HOME

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### ABSTRACT

Ageing become the public health burden. Stress and ageing will influence the immune system, causes poor health related outcomes among the older adults. Researcher found even though numerous studies have conducted in this area, but the problem persists among the older adults. With that view I have taken up this project. A well-structured tools, perceived stress scale (PSS) and stress coping assessment inventory was administered and responses elicited. Descriptive study was conducted among 20 older adults residing at selected old age home at Coimbatore. Results showed that among the selected samples, majority 60% of them are suffered with high level of stress and 70% of them are practicing average stress coping measures. Stress and stress coping are negatively correlated with each other. The selected variables Quality of life and frequency of visiting by the relatives are strongly associated with their stress level. Their Age places an important role in practicing the stress coping measures in a stress level environment. So the researcher recommended that various group activities, sharing sessions and family days can be planned for older adults residing in old age home.

### KEYWORDS

Level of stress, Quality of life and Public health.

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### INTRODUCTION

Number of physiological changes occur in response to variety of challenges in life. Stress is a part of all the human life. All the individual have to react separately according to their difficult situations and implement measures to overcome the obstacles. Nowadays worldwide, older people are living longer. Most of them are expect to live longer, specifically 60s and above. The world's aged population in the year of 2020 is 1 billion, it expected to rise up to 2 billion in the year if 2050. (WHO, 2021)<sup>1</sup>.

### Need of the study

Aging is one of the most challenging public health issue that is faced by the developing countries nowadays. Due to increasing rate of aged population, public and private sectors are implementing enormous actions to promote the successful ageing. Quality of life of an older adults are monitored in the terms of their mental health ability.

Changing environment of the individual will cause stressful live events. Due to ageing process, the ability to relax after stress becomes more difficult.

While assessing the factors to influence the immune system, stress and ageing factors are considered to be an important factor in it. Since the immune system plays a vital role in quality of life.

Over the last twenty years or so, most research on stress and coping has focused on younger adults, partly because of the widespread belief that older adults experience fewer life stresses and partly because of the assumption that coping strategies are similar across the lifespan. More recent studies are now able to show that the needs and problems of old age sector of population has long been ignored. Again, this may be due to stereotypic effects of ageism and misattribution of problems or pathology to ageing.

Developing nations like India, joint family system is a part of family system. Institutional care for older adults was not a regular option for them. However, with an increasing economic demands forcing more people to take up employment to meet the demands, the traditional extended family system is slowly crumbling and more elderly are being left to the care of old age homes.

Major reason for old age persons to join in old age home is to meet basic needs (50%) and negligence by family members (40%) based on the study conducted by the Department of Human Development and Family. WHO also projected that problems among the elderly in developed nations will increase from 9% to 12% by 2026. (WHO, 2001)<sup>1</sup>.

The prevalence and self-reported causes of loneliness among finish older population was examined. Loneliness was more common among

rural elderly people those living in cities [Savikko *et al*, 2005]<sup>2</sup>.

In the year of 2014, a descriptive study to assess the level of stress among the older adults in old age homes at Thailand. They have concluded that 80% of older adults in the selected residents are affected with moderate to high level stress.

In the year of 2018, a descriptive study was conducted to assess the perceived level of stress, coping and their correlation among retirees in Kashmir. It showed that the moderate level of stress was experienced by retired employees and they were used the average level of coping measures to deal with the stressful situations. Significant positive relation was found between the stress and coping scores among retired employees.

In the year of 2019, a cross sectional comparative study was conducted to assess the perceived level of stress and quality of life of elderly living separately from their adult children. It has shown that Living separately from their children and other family member in late life increase the perceived level of stress among elderly and resulting increase in poor quality of life. Stress and quality of life are negatively correlated.

In the year of 2020, a study was conducted to assess the stress, depression and coping strategies of older adults in old age homes at Tirupati. The study results revealed that the moderate level of stress experienced by highest percentage of elderly was 35%, low stress (30%) and 12% were perceived high level of stress. Elderly adults were adopting the coping strategies as follows, 56% were adapted adequately, and 35% and 9% were adapted moderately and poorly respectively. The study concluded that coping strategies was found to be effective in reducing level of stress and depression.

Keeping the above facts in view, the investigator interested to assess the level of stress and stress coping among older adults in old age home so that the appropriate knowledge would be obtained to promote health of elderly and prevent the mental health issues in older age people at its initial stages.

### **Problem Statement**

A descriptive study to assess the level of stress and stress coping among the older adults residing in selected old age home at Coimbatore.

### **Objectives**

To assess the level of stress among the older adults residing in selected old age home.

To assess the level of stress coping among the older adults residing in selected old age home.

To correlate the level of stress with stress coping among the older adults residing in selected old age home.

To associate the level of stress and stress coping with selected demographic variables.

### **Hypothesis**

The level of stress knowledge will vary from high level to low level. Stress coping level will ranges from superior stresscoper to below average stresscoper. Both variables may correlate with each other and it will have significant association with selected demographic variables.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The approval for conducting this study was obtained from the Head of the old age home. Demographic variables including Age, Gender, Monthly income, Qualification, quality of living, years in Old age home and frequency of visiting by relatives. Level of stress was assessed by Perceived Stress scale (PSS) and for the stress coping assessment, Stress coping assessment inventory was used. In PSS scale is a classic stress assessment instrument, where various stressful events were given as statements. Both positive and negative statements were given. In stress coping inventory, multiple choice questions of their daily routines were given. Standard scoring system was applied. The completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed by using MS excel 2007. Qualitative variables were expressed by percentages and Chi-square test was used to compare the difference in correct responses for each question. For all statistical analysis  $p < 0.05$  considered statistically significant. For correlational analysis, Karl Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

### **Population and sampling**

The study participants are residents of old age home who gave their informed consent and who were in the old age home during the research period. Those who were not willing to participate in the study were also excluded. Non probability convenient sampling technique was used.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Among the total of 20 participants, 10 are males and 10 are females who participated in this study. Regards to their age, 55% (11) are belongs to 60 - 70yrs, remaining 25% and 20% are in 71 - 80yrs and 80yrs and above category. 90% of them were dependant category and 10% were have the income of 1000 - 5000 monthly. In terms of their educational qualification, 85% are completed their school education and remaining 15% are collegiate qualification. 50% of them were physically dependant, remaining 40% and 10% are in the category of independent. Interdependent respectively. Only 10% of them are visited by their relatives weekly. 30% are in monthly, 35% are thrice a year and 25% are not visited by anyone. Regards with their duration in the old age home, 35% are in 1 - 3yrs, 30% are 4-6yrs, 20% are 3months - 1year and remaining 15% are residing more than 7 years. Regarding their level of stress, majority 60% participants in high level stress, remaining 40% are in moderate level of stress. No one comes under the category of low level of stress.

While assessing their stress coping level, 70% of them were having average level of stress coping, 20% are in above average stress coping and remaining 10% belongs to below average stress coping level.

While assessing the correlation between the level of stress and stress coping, I have found that, statistically both variables are having negative correlation ( $r = -0.15$ ) where the stress level will be increased in case of decreased stress coping.

A calculated chi square value of 29.51 was so greater than the critical chi square value of 9.5, so there was a strong association between the level of stress and their quality of life namely independent, interdependent and dependent life. Likewise the

value of 17.63 is greater than the value of 10.99 so there is a association between the level of stress with frequency of visiting by the relatives. Level of stress is not associated with the duration in the old age home since the calculated value (1.63) is not more than critical chi square value (5.99).

While assessing the association between the levels of stress coping with selected demographic variable, have found statistically there is an association with age factor. Their qualification and duration in old age home is not associating with the level of stress coping.

**Discussion**

The first objective of the study was to assess the level of stress among the older adults in selected old age home proved that t majority 70% of them are having high level of stress. The study results supported by the study conducted by Geethamani *et al* who assessed the level of stress among the older adults proved that majority 72% are affected with high level of stress and verbalized terms of suicidal thoughts and loneliness.

The second objective of the study was to assess the level of stress coping proved that the 70% of them are practicing average level of stress coping measures. It was paired with the study conducted at Thailand by sharaf *et al*, who assessed the use of stress coping measures by the older adults proved that older adults can able the use the moderate level of stress coping measures in an unknown stressful environment.

The third objective was to correlate the stress with stress coping showed that the negative correlations exists between these variables where the stress level will decreased when the stress coping level is enhanced.

**Table No.1: Distribution of socio demographic variables of the older adults**

S.No	Demographic variable	Data	Percentage
<b>Age</b>			
1	60 - 70 yrs	11	55%
2	71 - 80 yrs	5	25%
3	80 and above	4	20%
<b>Sex</b>			
4	Female	10	50%
5	Male	10	50%
<b>Monthly income</b>			
6	Dependant	18	90%
7	1000 - 5000	2	10%
8	5000 and above	-	
<b>Qualification</b>			
9	School education	17	85%
10	Collegiate	3	15%
<b>Quality of living</b>			
11	Dependant	10	50%
12	Independent	8	40
13	Interdependent	2	10%
<b>Visiting frequency by relatives</b>			
14	Weekly	2	10%
15	Monthly	6	30%

16	Yearly thrice	7	35%
17	others	-	-
18	None	5	25%
<b>Years in old age home</b>			
19	3 months - 12 months	4	20%
20	1 - 3 yrs	7	35%
21	4 - 6 yrs	6	30%
22	7 yrs and above	3	15%

**Table No.2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of stress among the older adults**

S.No	Score level	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	0 - 13	LOW STRESS	0	0
2	14 - 26	MODERATE	8	40%
3	27 - 40	HIGH	12	60%

**Table No.3: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of stress coping among the older adults**

S.No	Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	3.5 and above	Superior stresscoper	0	0
2	2.5 - 3.4	Above average stresscoper	4	20%
3	1.5 - 2.4	Average stresscoper	14	70%
4	Less than 1.5	Below average stresscoper	2	10%

**Table No.4: correlation coefficient between the level of stress and stress coping level of the older adults in the old age home**

S.No	Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Level of stress and Stress coping	-0.15 (negative correlation)

**Table No.4: Association of level of stress with selected demographic variables**

S.No	Variables	Table Value	P Value	Chi square value
1	Visiting frequency of relatives	10.99	6.42	17.63
2	Quality of living	9.5	6.23	29.51
3	Years in old age home	5.99	0.42	1.63

**Table No.5: Association of level of stress coping with selected demographic variables**

S.No	Variables	Table Value	P Value	Chi square value
1	Age	11.28	5.39	16.25
2	Qualification	6.82	0.78	1.53
3	Years in old age home	5.36	0.25	1.26

## CONCLUSION

The study results of the selected samples showed that there is a noticeable percentage level of stress present among the older adults residing in old age home. Their stress coping level also varies based upon their level of stress. Their quality of life and the visiting by relative variables are associated with their level of stress.

## RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that various activities and programs can be planned by the old age home. Various group sessions can be implemented to exchange their beliefs in life. They can conduct a family day to enhance the emotional and social bonding with the family.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

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