

## **Cross sectional survey on the loneliness and self esteem as perceived among elderly residing in old age homes**

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**ABSTRACT:** Ageing is an inevitable developmental phenomenon bringing along a number of changes in the physical, psychological, hormonal and the social conditions. As man grows, his reduced activities, income and consequent decline in the position of the family and society makes his life more vulnerable. An old person begins to feel that even his children do not look upon him with that degree of respect, which he used to get some years earlier. The old persons feel neglected and humiliated. This may lead to the development of psychology of shunning the company of others.

**Keywords:** loneliness, social support and self esteem, elderly, oldage homes

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Rapid growing of industry, modernization, in India has affected the people in many ways. The tradition of joint family in the culture of Indian society is disappearing slowly, which was based on love, affection and tradition. It has also transformed the life of family; people have started to believing in nuclear family rather than combined or joint. It has made people to live his own family which including husband, wife and their children. This scenario also affected the emotion of each individual person. In today's scenario, parents are afraid of their child that is the reason of them to have started refusing to live with them, due to this reason they have started moving into the old age home. Older adults living in facilities for the elderly will have to adjust to a changed living situation, and this adjustment can lead to serious psychosocial problems of loneliness and depression in the absence of positive social networks.<sup>(1)</sup>

The world population continues to grow older rapidly as fertility rates have fallen to very low levels in most world regions and people tend to live longer. From 2025 to 2050, the older population is projected to almost double to 1.6 billion globally, whereas the total population will grow by just 34 percent over the same period.<sup>(1)</sup>

Number of elderly in India is rising rapidly. India's elderly population is estimated at 10 crores in 2011, and is projected to reach 20 crore by 2030.

Though the population ageing can be seen as a success story for public health policies and for socioeconomic development, it also throws a challenge to the society to adapt in order to increase the health status and functional capacity of elderly people as well as their social participation and security (WHO, 2012 ) because certain degree of losses are linked with old age which are not limited only to loss of physical and cognitive capacity and functional ability, but also the loss of friends and family members. Also, elderly people have reduced social relationship due to depreciating health status and functionality, which in turn result in the loss of intimate relationships and a role in the society. Their social network reduces as does the amount of individuals from whom they get support. In addition, residential relocation is common among older people, moving from a family home to an institution, which implies a change in informal relations. All these factors are associated with an increased risk of experiencing loneliness.<sup>(2)</sup>

Nowadays, the role of families in case of older person has declined due to structural changes which have taken place in the Indian society and the concomitant disintegration of the joint family system, which results in the rejection or neglect of the aged. Life in institutions need not be bad but it commonly is. This holds true everywhere in the world. People go to institutions mainly because they have no relatives to care for them. Thus, the individuals who see alternative accommodation due to isolation or loneliness, relocation of congregate – style accommodation may increase their social contact and have a positive impact on their well- being.<sup>(3)</sup>

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the level of loneliness among elderly residing in old age homes of Udupi District.
2. Determine the level of self esteem among elderly residing in old age homes of Udupi District.
3. to find the association between level of loneliness, social support and self esteem among elderly with selected demographic variables.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a cross sectional survey using descriptive design was used. Target population in the present study is elderly above 60 years of age who are residing in old age homes and who meet the sampling criteria.

The criteria for the selection of sample for the present study were: Inclusion criteria comprised of elderly staying in old age homes, age above 60 years, willing to participate in the study, with physical health problems. The exclusion criteria comprised of the elderly suffering with psychological problems and cognitive impairment such as Dementia, Alzheimer's disease.

The sampling technique adopted for the study was non probability convenience sampling technique. Standardized tools like UCLA loneliness assessment scale, Rosenberg self esteem scale, was selected to gather information from the samples.

## IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Out of the total samples of 50, majority of the elderly 24(48%) of their age ranged from (81-90) years. Twenty eight percent of their age was from (71-80) years. It was observed from the data , that 9(18%) respondents were aged between (61-70) years. The study findings also demonstrated that elderly aged 50-60 years were 3(6%).

The percentage distribution of elderly in old age homes according to their gender reveals that highest percentage(70%) of samples are females and the least percentage(30%) are males. The majority of elderly (64%) are married, (36%) are single; none of them were widowers and divorced respectively. Majority (30%) were educated up to 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> standard, 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> standard (18%), 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> standard (14%), PUC(12%), ten percentage of the samples had no formal education, both graduate and post graduate(16%). Majority of them (42%) were the residents of old age homes for the past 1-5 years, whereas (24%) of them were staying for 5-10 years, more or less similar of them (20%) of the inmates resided in the old age home for >10 years. However, least percentage of senior citizens (14%) was staying for less than a year.

Older adults were likely to suffer or have illness or disability. About three quarters of the elderly had at least one of the four diseases. Majority (64%) of senior citizens residing in old age homes were suffering from illness and (36%) of them were free from illness. The majority (32%) of the inmates were suffering with hypertension, as well as (20%) of the elderly with diabetes, similarly (8%) with arthritis and least (4%) with bronchial asthma.

The percentage distribution of loneliness among elderly in old age home reveals that out of 50 samples, more than half i.e majority (86%) of the senior citizens has no loneliness. The study findings also shows that only 7(14%) were having loneliness which lead to negative perception towards old age.

The level of self esteem is average in majority (54%) of the elderly residing in old age homes, similarly (46%) of them were having normal self esteem and it also reveals that no inmates were having low self esteem.

There is no significant association between the level of loneliness with the selected demographic variables which are age, gender, education, marital status, duration of stay in old age home, presence of illness ( $p>0.05$ ). There is no significant association between the level of self esteem with the selected demographic variables which are age, gender, education, marital status, duration of stay in old age home, presence of illness( $P>0.05$ ).

## V. CONCLUSION

Policies and laws can be made at national level about the rights of geriatric population, which may bound everyone to take care of the elderly people and to resolve their issues by understanding their psychology without any delay.

The government should also launch a campaign to nursing homes such as mental health care campaign, talks, sport or activities for the elderly. Such activities not only can open a space for elderly to get acquainted with new friends but also can provide opportunities for them to be active with the community. Interaction in the community is important to keep the emotional health of an individual.

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