



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2021; SP-10(12): 1402-1405
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www.thepharmajournal.com
Received: 17-10-2021
Accepted: 23-11-2021

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Comparative study on psychological well-being of senior citizens across age and marital status

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Abstract

Psychological wellbeing refers to how people evaluate their life. According to World Health Organization psychological well-being is one of the key elements of our health. The study investigates the psychological well-being of senior citizens across age and marital status. The present study was conducted in Haryana state. Two districts Hisar and Sirsa were selected randomly. A total sample of 400 senior citizens was selected randomly representing equal number of males and females. From each district a sample of 200 senior citizens was drawn purposively comprising of 100 with spouse and 100 without spouse. Self-developed questionnaire was used to collect information on personal and socioeconomic variables. Psychological well-being of senior citizens was assessed by using Psychological Well Being Scale (Sisodia and Choudhary, 2005). The present investigation has come out with the results stated that high percentage of elderly were in moderate level of psychological well-being as well as its sub aspects. It is confirmed from the results that psychological well-being of with spouse respondents was higher as compared to without spouse respondents. Senior citizens ranging in the age group of 65-67.5 years of age group had higher level of psychological well-being as compared to the seniors with age group between 67.5⁺-70 years of age group.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, marital status, senior citizens

Introduction

Aging is an inevitable developmental phenomenon bringing along a number of changes in the physical, psychological, hormonal and the social conditions. Define ageing in terms of the biology; referring to “the regular changes that occur in mature genetically representative organism living under oppressive environmental conditions as they advance in chronological age”. Old age has been viewed, as problematic period of one’s life and this is correct to some extent (Tandon, 2016).

The ageing of population is an obvious consequence of the process of demographic transition. While the countries of the West have already experienced and have planned for their elderly population, it is only in the last one and half decades that countries in Asia too are facing a steady growth of the elderly, as a result of the decline in fertility and mortality, better medical and health care and improvements in the overall quality of life of people (Singh and Kiran, 2017).

Psychological wellbeing may be defined by the proper functioning of psychological system. Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. These evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect. Psychological well-being is generated by two dimensions which are absence of depression and emotional loneliness and presence of happiness, life satisfaction, feeling of security, and plans for the future (Savikko, 2008) [5].

Psychological well-being is a very complex personal phenomenon. It forms as a result of human activity in the system of real relationships with surrounding objects. Psychological well-being can be described as a feeling of life satisfaction, the quality of life, personal self-fulfilment, creation of objective and subjective values. There is a number of aspects, such as evaluative well-being (or life satisfaction), hedonic well-being (feelings of happiness, sadness, etc.) and eudemonic well-being (sense of purpose and meaning of life) (Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015) [8]. This well-being is associated with the phenomena of self-actualization, personal growth and fulfilment. It is also connected to the person’s emotional assessment of her/himself and his/her own life. Psychological well-being is important in human development in the late age. The shaping of the well-being is determined by personal, cognitive, communicative and other psychological and non-psychological factors.

Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. According to these evaluations may be in the form of cognition or in the form of affect.

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There are several psychological and social factors that have been linked to increased individual life expectancy and quality of life in older adults. Psychological well-being has been examined as an indicator of successful adaptation during old and very old age. Psychological well-being studied extensively as there is a need to improve the state of mental condition of people.

Objectives

- To assess the level of psychological well-being of senior citizens across age and marital status.
- To compare the level of psychological well-being of senior citizens across age and marital status.

Methodology

Haryana state was selected purposively as the locale for the present investigation because the researcher is student of CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar. A list of districts was prepared. Two districts Hisar and Sirsa were selected at random. Further Hisar and Sirsa city were considered to draw the sample. From each city different localities were approached to draw the required sample. List of senior citizens ranging from 65-70 years of age group were prepared. A total sample of 400 senior citizens was selected randomly comprising of 200 with spouses and 200 without spouse. From each district a sample of 200 senior citizens was drawn purposively comprising of 100 with spouse and 100 without spouse. The sample represented equal number of males and females. Two types of variables independent (personal and socio-economic variables) and dependent (psychological well-being and its aspects) were studied. Self-developed questionnaire was used to collect information on personal and socioeconomic variables. Psychological well-being of senior

citizens was assessed by using Psychological Well Being Scale (Sisodia and Choudhary, 2005) [7]. The data for the present research was collected personally through interview method. Visits were made to the selected areas in order to establish a rapport and to ensure full cooperation for the identified sample.

Result and discussion

Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per age

Table 1 highlights the distribution of senior citizens for psychological well-being as per age. Data regarding life satisfaction shows that majority of the respondents from 65-67.5 years of age group had moderate level of life satisfaction (48.06%) followed by high (33.00%) and low (18.94%), whereas majority of the respondents from 67.5⁺-70 years of age group had moderate level of life satisfaction (51.04%) followed by low (32.47%) and high level (16.49%). Similar trends were observed in terms of efficiency, sociability and overall psychological well-being.

Table 1 further discloses that majority of the respondents from 65-67.5 years of age group had moderate level of mental health i.e., 47.57 per cent, whereas majority of the respondents from 67.5⁺-70 years of age group had low level of mental health i.e., 44.34 per cent.

Data regarding interpersonal relations discloses that almost equal number of respondents from 65-67.5 years of age group had high and moderate level of interpersonal relations i.e., 43.20 and 42.72 per cent respectively. Whereas majority of the respondents from 67.5⁺-70 years of age group had moderate level of interpersonal relations (49.48%) followed by equal number of low and high level of interpersonal relations i.e., 25.26 per cent.

Table 1: Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per age

Psychological well-being	65-67.5 years (n ₁ =206)	67.5 ⁺ -70 years (n ₂ =194)	Total, N=400
Life satisfaction			
Low (17-27)	39 (18.94)	63 (32.47)	102 (25.50)
Moderate (28-38)	99 (48.06)	99 (51.04)	198 (49.50)
High (39-48)	68 (33.00)	32 (16.49)	100 (25.00)
Efficiency			
Low (16-26)	28 (13.60)	57 (29.38)	85 (21.25)
Moderate (27-37)	106 (51.45)	98 (50.52)	204 (51.00)
High (38-48)	72 (34.95)	39 (20.10)	111 (27.75)
Mental health			
Low (22-30)	52 (25.24)	86 (44.34)	138 (35.50)
Moderate (31-39)	98 (47.58)	76 (39.17)	174 (43.50)
High (40-48)	56 (27.18)	32 (16.49)	88 (22.00)
Sociability			
Low (20-28)	43 (20.87)	72 (37.11)	115 (28.75)
Moderate (29-37)	109 (52.91)	89 (45.87)	198 (49.50)
High (38-46)	54 (26.22)	33 (17.02)	87 (21.75)
Interpersonal relations			
Low (20-28)	29 (14.08)	49 (25.26)	78 (19.50)
Moderate (29-37)	88 (42.72)	96 (49.48)	184 (46.00)
High (38-46)	89 (43.20)	49 (25.26)	138 (34.50)
Overall psychological well-being			
Low (95-138)	27 (13.11)	47 (24.22)	74 (18.50)
Moderate (139-182)	94 (45.63)	111 (57.23)	205 (51.25)
High (183-226)	85 (41.26)	36 (18.55)	121 (30.25)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.

Mean comparison of psychological well-being of senior citizens as per age

Means and standard deviations of different sub aspects of psychological well-being and overall psychological well-

being was computed. Independent sample z-test was computed to explore whether there existed differences in psychological well-being on the basis of age of senior citizens. Overall psychological well-being and different

dimensions of psychological well-being were taken as dependent variables and age was taken as independent variable. Results are presented in table 2.

Table 2 highlights the results related to comparison of various aspects of psychological well-being on the basis of age. Significant differences were observed in life satisfaction ($z = 2.87^*$), efficiency ($z = 3.67^*$), mental health ($z = 2.76^*$), sociability ($z = 2.92^*$), interpersonal relations ($z = 2.49^*$) and overall psychological well-being ($z = 3.46^*$). It is clear from the mean scores that 65-67.5 years of age group respondents outscored 67.5+70 years age group respondents in all the sub aspects of psychological well-being and overall psychological well-being.

Table 2: Comparison of psychological well-being of senior citizens as per age

Psychological well-being	65-67.5 years Mean±SD	67.5+70 years Mean±SD	Z value
Life Satisfaction	34.76±7.69	31.68±7.51	2.87*
Efficiency	34.50±7.04	30.82±7.13	3.67*
Mental health	34.96±6.66	32.37±6.62	2.76*
Sociability	33.70±6.19	31.14±6.20	2.92*
Interpersonal relations	35.76±6.34	33.57±6.08	2.49*
Overall psychological well-being	173.69±29.02	159.61±28.47	3.46*

Significant at *5% level of significance

The results are in line with the findings of Tejal (2010) [10] unveiled that level of psychological well-being is comparatively higher among the lower age group aged than

higher age group aged. Dhara and Jogsan (2013) [4] in their study declared that for psychological well-being, adult received higher mean score (132.31) as compared aged (126.16) with standard deviation 12.54 and 14.85. T-value was 3.17, significant at 0.01 levels. The finding got support from the results of Devi and Roopa (2013) [3] who stated that in institutional settings majority of men and women in the two age groups showed higher level of quality of life. Comparatively more women in 65-70 years (25.0%) and 71-76 years (24.0%) showed low level of quality of life than men.

Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per marital status

Table 3 discloses the distribution of senior citizens for psychological well-being as per marital status. Data related to overall psychological well-being of total respondents demonstrates that 51.25 per cent had moderate level of overall psychological well-being followed by high (30.25%) and low level (18.50%). Data regarding with spouse respondents shows that almost equal number of respondents had moderate and high level of overall psychological well-being i.e., 45.00 per cent and 44.00 per cent respectively, followed by low level (11.00%). 57.50 per cent of without spouse respondents had moderate level of overall psychological well-being followed by low (26.00%) and high (16.50%).

Table 3: Psychological well-being of senior citizens as per marital status

Psychological well-being	With spouse (n ₁ =200)	Without spouse (n ₂ =200)	Total, N=400
Life satisfaction			
Low (17-27)	30 (15.00)	72 (36.00)	102 (25.50)
Moderate (28-38)	103 (51.50)	95 (47.50)	198 (49.50)
High (39-48)	67 (33.50)	33 (16.50)	100 (25.00)
Efficiency			
Low (16-26)	30 (15.00)	55 (27.50)	85 (21.25)
Moderate (27-37)	92 (46.00)	112 (56.00)	204 (51.00)
High (38-48)	78 (39.00)	33 (16.50)	111 (27.75)
Mental health			
Low (22-30)	45 (22.50)	93 (46.50)	138 (34.50)
Moderate (31-39)	92 (46.00)	82 (41.00)	174 (43.50)
High (40-48)	63 (31.50)	25 (12.50)	88 (22.00)
Sociability			
Low (20-28)	35 (17.50)	80 (40.00)	115 (28.75)
Moderate (29-37)	107 (53.50)	91 (45.50)	198 (49.50)
High (38-46)	58 (29.00)	29 (14.50)	87 (21.75)
Interpersonal relations			
Low (20-28)	21 (10.50)	57 (28.50)	78 (19.50)
Moderate (29-37)	86 (43.00)	98 (49.00)	184 (46.00)
High (38-46)	93 (46.50)	45 (22.50)	138 (34.50)
Overall psychological well-being			
Low (95-138)	22 (11.00)	52 (26.00)	74 (18.50)
Moderate (139-182)	90 (45.00)	115 (57.50)	205 (51.25)
High (183-226)	88 (44.00)	33 (16.50)	121 (30.25)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

The table further gives distribution of respondents on the sub aspects of psychological well-being and it was seen that majority of the total respondents had moderate level of life satisfaction, efficiency, mental health, sociability and interpersonal relations.

Majority of the with spouse respondents had moderate level of life satisfaction, efficiency, mental health, sociability and interpersonal relations followed by high and low level though

there was variation in percentages. Majority of the without spouse respondents had moderate level of life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability and interpersonal relations except mental health aspect where the majority had low level followed by moderate and high level.

Mean comparison of psychological well-being of senior citizens as per marital status

Independent sample z-test was computed to explore whether there existed differences in psychological well-being on the basis of marital status of senior citizens. Overall psychological well-being and different dimensions of psychological well-being were taken as dependent variables and marital status of senior citizens was taken as independent variable. Results are presented in table 14.

Table 4 highlights the results related to comparison of various aspects of psychological well-being on the basis of marital status using z-test. Significant differences were observed in all the sub aspects of psychological well-being and overall psychological well-being. Mean scores of with spouse respondents outscored without spouse respondents in all the sub aspects of psychological well-being and overall psychological well-being.

Table 4: Comparison of psychological well-being of senior citizens as per marital status

Psychological well-being	With Spouse Mean±SD	Without spouse Mean±SD	Z value
Life Satisfaction	34.85±7.50	31.68±7.67	2.96*
Efficiency	34.82±7.26	30.61±6.75	4.25*
Mental health	35.43±6.95	31.99±6.12	3.71*
Sociability	34.02±5.96	30.90±6.30	3.60*
Interpersonal relations	36.39±5.92	33.01±6.23	3.93*
Overall psychological well-being	175.52±28.82	158.21±27.78	4.32*

Significant at *5% level of significance

The results are in line with the findings of Ao and Ngangbam (2015) ^[2] showed that those who are currently married shows higher mean values for positive psychological affect whereas negative psychological affect was higher for those who are never married and widowed. Anu (2015) ^[1] also divulged similar finding as significant differences were observed in psychological well-being and its sub aspects except efficiency and interpersonal relations against marital status. Mean comparison wise elderly who have both spouses were better psychological well-being as their counterparts.

Suggestions

- Senior citizens should be involved in different activities like, meditation and spiritual gatherings, yoga and regular exercise sessions for improving their well-being.
- Grandchildren should be motivated by the parents to take care of their grandparents and talk to them regularly.
- Grandchildren should consider teaching the senior citizens to use technologies like android mobiles, internet etc. so that they maintain connections with the fast-changing society.
- Senior citizens should opt for their hobbies as they have time to spend for themselves, hobbies can keep them motivated and forward-thinking.

Conclusion

The research results pinpointed that high percentage of elderly were in moderate level of psychological well-being as well as its sub aspects. It is confirmed from the results that psychological well-being of with spouse respondents was higher as compared to without spouse respondents. Senior citizens ranging in the age group of 65-67.5 years of age group had higher level of psychological well-being as compared to the seniors with age group between 67.5⁺-70 years of age group.

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