

Mental Health Of Elderly As Related To Their Well Being And Self Esteem

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ABSTRACT: *The present investigation was conducted to gain an insight into the Mental Health of Elderly as Related to their Well Being and Self Esteem from middle income group belonging to the urban areas of Chandigarh. The study was conducted on 100 elderly out of whom 50 were females and 50 males belonging to the age group of 60-65 years. Standardized tools namely Friedman-well-being, Self esteem inventory and Mental Health Inventory were used. The results showed that correlation between some of the variables of Wellbeing, Self esteem and mental health were significant. Multiple regression analysis showed that some of the variables of well being and Self esteem predicted mental health among elderly.*

KEYWORDS: *Mental Health, well being, self esteem*

I. INTRODUCTION

Aging is a normal stage of life, which comes to every person (Sethi & Gupta, 1980). Saraswati (1998) also considered old age as the 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. In our Indian society old age has always been a concern due to lack of power in social, economic and professional spheres; and its closeness to death but with changed family patterns and value system there is a drastic change in the lifestyle and living standards in the society as well as at home front. As population aging becomes more and more pronounced, the concern for Mental Health and Wellbeing of older people is also increasing. With the unprecedented increase in the number of oldest adults, several studies have paid attention to centenarians and their lives exploring factors related to longevity, such as health, generic influences, general life style etc. Little emphasis has been given to see the gender differences between elderly and their problems. However, till date in India, research on aging was primarily confined to socio-demographic profiles, problems of and services to the aged etc. As a result certain issues related to the problems of elderly have received insufficient attention to the scholars and one such area is elderly Wellbeing, Self-esteem and Mental Health. Even speculation about the nature of the problem has been difficult because of invisibility and sensitiveness of the problem. The elderly often experience mental health issues and mental disorders. Some of the most common mental health issues and concerns are dementia, bi-polar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, delirium,

Alzheimer's disease and more. Physical health and mental health are often intertwined; the physical changes experienced by the elderly can create stress and uncertainty which can in turn cause mental illness. These changes can range from the reduction of sensitivities (e.g. hearing loss, reduced vision, etc.) to conditions affecting mobility and/or cognition (e.g. heart disease, stroke, arthritis, etc.). These physical health problems may make it difficult for seniors to leave their residences and interact with family and friends. In general wellbeing shows some degree of positive correlation with positive qualities of life and negative correlation with neuroticism, psychoticism and other such variables. Some determinants of good quality old age positive self concept, a favorable perception of one's capacity to manage affairs, a favorable perception of inter-relationship with family, a belief in karma and philosophy and a flexible outlook and habits. In the same way self-esteem is fundamental to the elder's experience of life. It is broadly defined personality variable referring to the degree to which an individual values and accepts him- or herself. According to Cooper (1967), self esteem is the positive or negative value attached by an individual and what she is and what she does. According to Hunter, Linn, Linn, Harris, R (1981-1982), elderly with either high or low self-esteem did not differ with respect to age, income, education, or living-arrangement. However, elders with low self esteem had poorer health, more pain, and higher disability. The low self-esteem elders had significantly higher scores on depression, anxiety, somatization, and a more external locus of control orientation both with and without health variables controlled. The aging of a person presents various problems to the individual as well as those around them. With age mental faculties become weak and ailing, hence making it difficult for them to stay in a happy state of mind. Added to these are often economic difficulties, family troubles, regional and housing hardships leading to mental maladjustments. Keeping these factors in mind the present study was taken up with the following objectives:

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship of well being and self esteem with mental health of elderly.
2. To assess the relative and conjoint predictability of self esteem and wellbeing for the mental health of elderly.

II. METHOD

The present study was conducted on 100 elderly (50 males & 50 females) belonging to the age group of 65years and above. The respondents were selected randomly. Care was taken to see that the elderly were staying with their spouses, children and grandchildren. Respondents belonged to urban area and were from middle class income group. None of the respondents were single; all of them had their spouses staying with them.

Tools Used:

Tools used for measuring various variables of the study have been given in the table below:

**Table 1
Tools used for the study**

Well-Being Scale	Friedman-Well-Being Scale ,By Friedman, P.H. (1994)
Self Esteem Inventory	Self Esteem Inventory , By Coopersmith, S.(2008)
Mental Health Inventory	Mental Health Inventory, By Veit, C.T. , Ware, J.E.(2003)

Statistical Analysis: For the analysis Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation and Multiple Regression were used.

III. RESULTS

The results have been discussed under the following sub heads:

Intercorrelations:

Intercorrelations between variables of Mental health and Wellbeing of elderly

Intercorrelations were found between variables of Mental health and the Wellbeing among elderly. The six variables of wellbeing, namely Wellbeing composite, Sociability, Self esteem, Joviality, Emotional stability and Happiness were kept on one side and variables of Mental Health , namely Anxiety, Depression, Loss of Behavioral and Emotional control, General positive affect, Emotional ties, Life satisfaction were kept on the other.

**Table-2
Intercorrelation between variables of Mental health and Wellbeing among elderly**

Mental health variables	Wellbeing composite	Sociability	Self esteem/ self confidence	Joviality	Emotional stability	Happiness	Wellbeing
Anxiety	-.377(**)	-.301(**)	-.219(*)	-.162	-.291(**)	-.119	-.319(**)
Depression	-.169	-.091	-.035	.066	-.195	.026	-.078
Loss of behavioral/ emotional control	.016	.052	.046	.039	-.013	.042	.044
General positive affect	.418(**)	.529(**)	.429(**)	.199(*)	.314(**)	.386(**)	.515(**)
Emotional ties	.110	.162	.333(**)	.208(*)	.069	.243(*)	.258(**)
Life satisfaction	-.117	.064	-.020	.033	-.140	-.077	-.045
Mental health	.150	.333(**)	.320(**)	.152	.080	.323(**)	.319(**)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As seen from the above table, it is clear that there is no a significant correlation between Depression, Loss of Behavioral and Emotional control and Life satisfaction (variables of Mental Health) with variables of Wellbeing. Anxiety (variable of Mental Health) showed negative significant correlation with Wellbeing composite, Sociability, Emotional stability (variable of Wellbeing) and Wellbeing at 0.01 level of significance and with Self esteem/Self confidence(Mental Health variable) at 0.05 level of significance. It means higher the Anxiety lower the Sociability, Emotional stability and Self esteem/Self confidence. The reason for the above results could be because if the elderly have healthy mental health that is absence of anxiety, presence of general positive affect, emotional ties, life satisfaction the more they will be sociable, jovial, emotionally stable, happy, high in self esteem and hence this will lead to higher level of wellbeing. The above result has been supported by Momtaz YA, Ibrahim R, Hamid TA, Yahaya N (2011).

Inter correlations between variables of Mental health with Self esteem of elderly

Table 3
Inter correlation between variables of Mental health with Self esteem among elderly

Mental health variables	Self esteem (r)
Anxiety	.107
Depression	.054
Loss of behavioral and emotional control	.015
General positive affect	.372(**)
Emotional ties	.318(**)
Life satisfaction	.216(*)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It is evident from the above table that there exists no significant correlation between anxiety, depression and loss of behavioral and emotional control (variables of Mental Health) with Self esteem whereas there is a significant positive correlation between variables of Mental Health namely general positive affect, emotional ties at 0.01 level of significance and life satisfaction at 0.05 level of significance with Self esteem. It means higher the general positive affect, emotional ties and life satisfaction higher will be the self esteem. Higher the mental health more active and productive elderly will be in their later life. They will have sound and healthy social relation and more positive self concept and feeling of worthiness which leads to high self esteem. Anand P. Singh, Archana Shukla, Pratibha A. Singh (2010) studied perceived self esteem as predictor of mental health among elderly population. The result showed that elderly with High self esteem have better Mental health and wellbeing.

Multiple Regressions: This section has been made to ascertain the predictive variables of wellbeing and self esteem conjointly for the criterion variable of mental health among elderly. Results were obtained through step up Regression analysis.

The independent variables included Self esteem and Wellbeing along its six sub variables namely, Wellbeing composite, Sociability, Self esteem/Self confidence, Joviality, Emotional stability, Happiness. Thus by involving a total of 8 variables in the step up regression equation certain models were formulated by keeping in view the guiding principles that -

- 1) The variable which had the strongest positive and negative correlation with the dependent variable was to be entered first, followed by other variable in the descending values of 'r' in the model.
- 2) If the addition of a certain variable or sub variable did not significantly add up the contributory variance towards criterion variable, it was deleted from further models.

Table 4
Regression analysis of Wellbeing and Self esteem for Mental Health among elderly

Model	Independent variable	R square	R square change	F change	F sig change
1	Self esteem	.161	.161	18.806	.000
2	Self esteem + Sociability	.241	.080	10.244	.002
3	Self esteem + Sociability + Happiness	.273	.031	4.143	.045
4	Self esteem + Sociability + Happiness+ Wellbeing composite	.308	.035	4.800	.031

There is significant predictability of mental health from wellbeing and self esteem. Self esteem, Sociability, Happiness and Wellbeing composite were found to be significantly contributing to Mental Health among elderly. Ulrich Schimmack and Vivian Dzokoto (2011) studied wellbeing, self concept: Integrating Process Models of Mental health among elderly. The authors examined the interplay of wellbeing and self concept in the prediction of the affective mental health. The results suggested that there is a strong influence of self esteem and wellbeing on predicting mental health among elderly population. Wellbeing and Self esteem are the most important factors in predicting the Mental Health of older adults. The absence of Self esteem and Wellbeing among elderly shows some disadvantage impacting their lives. Their presence among elderly significantly predicts their ability to cope with stress and have healthy mental health. Knowing that they are valued and that they hold position or authority in their personal and social life are the important psychological factors in helping them to forget the negative aspect of their lives, and thinking more positively about their environment. It was seen that good educational status, active involvement in some or other work after retirement especially and having healthy social relations leads to a high level of self esteem and thereby high wellbeing and mental health among elderly. With the advancement in medical sciences people are living longer than before. Therefore it becomes important for elderly to occupy themselves with some work after retirement for a healthy and independent life. Elderly are important contributors to the society in terms of handling job which do not require much physical work. They are the store house of experience and wisdom.

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