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A COMPARATIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF DEPRESSION AMONG ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN SELECTED OLD AGE HOMES, TIRUPATI

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Abstract: *Background*: The purpose of this study was designed to compare the level of depression among elderly men and women residing at old age home, Tirupati. *Methods:* A comparative study was conducted to assess level of depression on a sample of 100 elderly people (50 from men and 50 from women), aged more than 60 years by using Yesavege Geriatric Depression Scale (30 items) Data was analyzed by statistical techniques; mean, S.D, t-test. *Results:* The major findings of the study revealed among 50 elderly men, 11(22%) had normal, 35(70%) had mild depression and 4(8%) had severe depression where as in 50 women 5(10%) had normal, 27(54%) had mild depression and 18(36%) had severe depression. For men there was a statistically significant association exists between no. of children in the family and reason for staying in the old age home at 0.05 level. There was a statistically significant association exists between women's depression and educational status at 0.01 level. Conclusion: The present study revealed that there was significant difference seen between level of depression among elderly men and women. Results of the present study concluded that the institutionalized elderly men and women had mild to severe depression.

Keywords: Depression, Elderly people

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INTRODUCTION

Aging is a natural process and it is considered as a normal, biological and an inevitable process. The process of aging is classically depicted as one of constant and inexorable decline after reaching a peak of bodily function and efficiency around the second decade of life. "Old age is an incurable disease" observes Seneca. More recently Sir James Sterling Ross commented "You do not heal old age, you protect it, you promote it, you expand it". Aging is a major life change, which includes physiological and psychological changes. Old age should be regarded as a normal inevitable biological phenomenon. [K. Park 1998][1]

The concept of "old" has changed drastically over the years. Our prehistoric ancestors probably had a life span of 40 years, with an average life span of around 18years. As civilization developed, mortality rates remained high because of periodic famine and frequent malnutrition. After 17th century, assured food supply, changes in food production, better housing condition and more progressive medical and sanitation facilities have contributed to population growth, declining mortality rates and substantial increases in longevity. [Mary Townsend] [2] According to age Structure of World's Population 1.8 billion People under age 15 years (26%), 4.4 billion People age 15-64 years (66%) and 579 million people are 65 years and over (8%). [3] The number of elderly reached around 76 million in 2001, and it is expected to reach around 120 million by 2031. The decadal rate of growth of elderly population in India indicates that elderly population has exploded in their age range. [EPW Research foundation 2002][4]

According to 2011 census among the states of India Kerala has highest elderly population with 12.6% followed by Tamil Nadu with 10.4%, Punjab with 10.3%, Maharashtra with 9.9% and Andhra Pradesh with 9.8% which is in top 5th place in elderly population[5]. According to 2001 district wise census of Andhra Pradesh, Chittoor district has 3, 32,994 elderly people aged more than 60[6]. Gradually there is a trend in the family to become nuclear as more and more youngsters are leaving their family either for occupation or education to go to different cities and countries. As a consequence, the elderly are either left alone, or they are taken to old age homes. This causes more isolation and depression in the elderly people.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A non – experimental research design (comparative descriptive design) was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Navajeevan old age home, Tirupati, Chittoor (Dist), A.P. 100 elderly people (50 men urban and 50 from women) were selected by purposive sampling technique. The present study planned mainly to assess the level of depression among elderly men and women.Hence the following tools were used in the study. It consists of 2 sections.

Section I - contains questions to collect demographic data

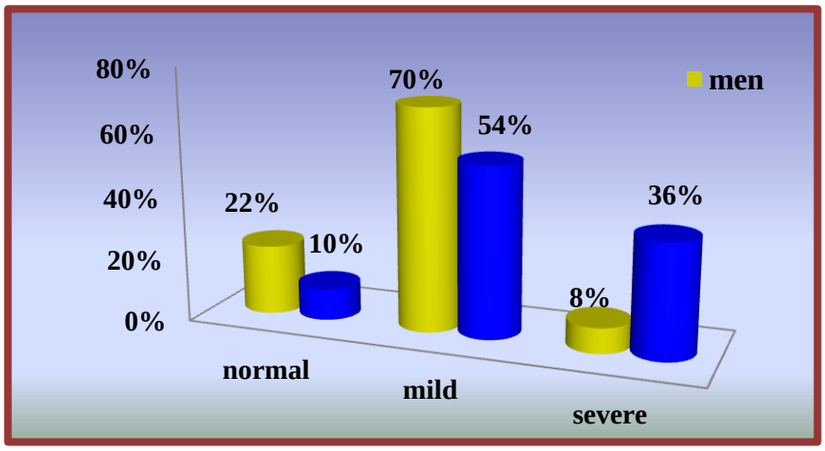
Section II – Yesavage (1983) Geriatric depression scale (long form).

The investigator made them to sit comfortably and introduced herself to each participant and explained the purpose of the study and took a written consent and administered the questionnaire to the participants through interview schedule and for the illiterate participants the investigator asked the questions and the responses of the participants were recorded. The data collection took 15-20 minutes for each participant.

RESULTS:

Distribution of level of depression among elderly men and women

LEVEL OF DEPRESSION



The above figure shows that in men, 11(22%) had normal, 35(70%) had mild depression and 4(8%) had severe depression where as in women 5(10%) had normal, 27(54%) had mild depression and 18(36%) had severe depression.

Table-1: mean, standard deviation and‘t’ test values of depression among elderly men and women

S.NO	CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN DIFFERENCE	‘t’ cal. value	‘t’ tab. Value	SIGNIFICANCE
1.	Men	12.86	4.155	- 3.30	3.379	2.365	**
2.	Women	16.16	32				

The above table-1 shows that the mean of the level of depression in men and women were 12.86 and 16.16, standard deviation was 4.155 and 32 respectively, the mean difference was -3.30. The‘t’ test calculated value is 3.3790 more than‘t’ table value 2.365.

Table-2 Association of demographic variables with level of depression among elderly men and women.

Sr. No		Chi-square(x^2)				D.F		Inference	
		Cal value		Table value					
		men	women	men	women	Men	women	Men	women
1.	Age in years	18.82	18.82	23.69	23.69	14	14	NS	NS
2.	Religion	1.330	1.814	9.49	9.49	4	4	NS	NS
3.	Educational status	6.233	23.345	18.31	23.21	10	10	N S	S*
4.	Marital status	2.408	2.316	12.59	12.59	6	6	NS	NS
5.	No. of children	13.22	5.220	12.59	12.59	6	6	S*	NS
6.	Type of family	3.321	2.629	5.99	5.99	2	2	NS	NS

7.	Previous place of residence	4.318	6.292	9.49	9.49	4	4	NS	NS
8.	Hobbies	4.476	4.168	12.59	12.59	6	6	NS	NS
9.	Illness	1.910	1.740	5.99	5.99	2	2	NS	NS
10.	Occupation	2.358	2.620	12.59	12.59	6	6	NS	NS
11.	Reason for staying	12.57	7.971	12.59	12.59	6	6	S*	NS
12.	Duration of staying	3.718	0.795	9.49	9.49	4	4	NS	NS
13.	Financial support	3.267	2.965	15.51	15.51	8	8	NS	NS

The data presented in the above Table-2 revealed that there was a statistically significant association exists between no. of children in the family and reason for staying in the old age home at 0.05 level .There were no statistically significant associations exist between the age, religion, education, marital status, residence, hobbies, illness, occupation, duration of staying, and financial support where as in women there was a statistically significant association exists between educational status at 0.01 level There was no statistically significant association exist between the age, religion, marital status, no. of children, type of family, previous place of residence, hobbies, illness, occupation, reason for staying in the old age home, duration of staying, and financial support.

DISCUSSION:

The research study was done to "Assess the level of depression among elderly men and women residing at Navajeevan old age home, Tirupati". The discussion of the present study is based on findings obtained from descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of collected data. It is presented in view of the objectives of the study.

OBJECTIVE 1: To assess the level of depression among elderly men and women.

Among 50 elderly men, 11(22%) had normal, 35(70%) had mild depression, and 4(8%) had severe depression where as in 50 women 5(10%) had normal, 27(54%) had mild depression and 18(36%) had severe depression.

The results of the present study were supported by Jariwala Vishal, Bansal RK, Patel Swathi, Tamakuwala Bimal (2007) conducted on depression among elderly men and women living in old age homes Surat city, Gujarat. Results showed that the prevalence of depression was 34.9% for men and 41.9% for women[7].

OBJECTIVE 2: To compare the level of depression between elderly men and women.

Among elderly men the mean 12.86 and standard deviation 4.155 were obtained, where as in women the mean 16.16 and standard deviation 32 were obtained. The independent t-value=3.3790 statistically significant at 2.365 level, which clearly shows that there was significant difference in level of depression between elderly men and women.

The results of the study were supported by Gopal et al (2009) on depression among elderly population aged above 60 years living in old age homes and in the community. Depression was found to be more in inmates of old age homes. On gender wise analysis depression was found to be more among females[8].

OBJECTIVE 3: To find the association between level of depression of elderly men and women with their selected demographic variables.

Among 100 elderly men and women there was a statistically significant association exists between no. of children in the family and reason for staying in the old age home at 0.05 level for men where as for women there was a statistically significant association exists between educational status at 0.01 level.

The results of the present study were supported by Mr. Sharad et.al (2012) conducted a study to assess the depression among elderly population residing in selected villages of Rahata Tehsil, Maharashtra. Results showed that, 51.42% (36) of the participants were found to have mild depression and 11.42% (08) with severe depression. Education, family income, living arrangement and medical illness were found to be significantly associated with depression by using chi square test at 5% level of significance, among the elderly participants[9].

The results of the present study were supported by Fariba Moradi et al (2009) identified the prevalence of depression and the effect of various demographic characteristics on its severity in an elderly population in Fars province, southern Iran. Results shown that the prevalence of the symptoms mild to moderate depression (GDS: 5-10) was 51.1%, while that of severe depression symptoms (GDS >10) were 19.7%. There were significant relationships between gender, marital status, educational level, occupation, residential place and the GDS scores[49].

CONCLUSIONS:

The present study revealed that there was statistically significant difference between level of depression among elderly men and women. Evidence from this investigation showed that the institutionalized elderly people had depression. The elderly constitute a large segment of the population. Owing to decrease in mortality rate and increase in the life expectancy the elderly population increases. Older adults are likely to have depression that contributes to problem in other areas of their lives. So in no other area of nursing is it more important for nurses to practice holistic nursing than with the elderly. Since aging is a growing problem and is ignored by the youth, most of the elderly are subjected to institutionalization and it is the paramount duty of the nurse to take care of them.

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