

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF GERIATRIC PEOPLE

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Introduction:

In the past old were generally respected. The old were never a burden to the family. An old man continued to work in the farm or home till late in his life. The old women nursed their grand children and provided native medicine to the sick in the family. The grandfather, if he were literate, taught the children to read and write. If the old were fit for nothing else, they could at least provide watch and ward for the family and look after the very young. The wisdom and experience of the old was an asset to the community. Hence it was natural that the old were accorded a high status in the past.

But then things have changed from bad to worse in the recent times as far as the aged are concerned. It is, of course, true that the aged in India are not as handicapped as the aged in some parts of the western world. However, it is beyond doubt that the aged in India now have a feeling of being neglected, if not being let down or despised. Today some people have stopped taking care of the old. Today many urban homes find it difficult to accommodate the old men and women. The working sons or the daughters-in-law find it difficult to take care of the old parents-in-law. The old people have started grumbling about it. As in the other parts of the world the old people in India are experiencing deterioration in their status.

There are many problems faced by the geriatric people. There are emotional and psychological, sociological and economical problems associated ageing. Loneliness and physical isolation create emotional disturbance, though the geriatric people in India are more fortunate in this regard to the western counterparts. Old age, in all countries, is often a time of loss in terms of relationships. The geriatric people not only face physical problems as they are aged, but they also experience emotional challenges as well. The geriatric people are faced with stresses that may include living on a reduced retirement income or being unable to care for themselves independently. They may be facing the loss of a spouse, siblings or close friends. Caretakers need to know what to expect regarding the emotions of elderly people and be prepared to help with them.

Mental changes they will have impaired memory, rigidity of outlook, reduced income leads to fail in living standards. Emotional disorders failure to adapt to situations leads to bitterness, inner withdrawal and depression may arise. Let them talk, listen to them what they are saying, even if it is not so important matter. Many elderly people are often lonely. They may have become socially lonely in these later years. Ask the elderly person to tell you what they are feeling, which will help them to cope up with emotional problems. When elderly people may be experience difficult emotions so you can be ready to help. Help the elderly person in your life stay physically active. Physical exercise benefits the body as well as the mind. Suggest taking walks with them several times a week or ask if they want to join a fitness class. Ease a elderly people mind regarding their health by taking them to his physician regularly. Social activity like going out mixing with other people will create a sense of belonging.

As a result of changes in the traditional value systems and norms, the gap between the geriatric people and the younger members to the family is increasing. Even though the old people become weaker physically they want to tighten their grip over the younger ones in the family. Hence, the younger members instead of developing a sympathetic attitude towards the old, start asserting their rights and power. This may create tension in the family and conflict between the young and the old. Neither one is prepared to understand or cope with the other. This does happen due to what is known as 'generation gap'. This type of misunderstanding widens the gap between the geriatric people and the young ones in the family. As a result many geriatric people prefer old age home as a last resort in their life. In this research I search psycho-socio and economical problems of geriatric people living in charitable institutions.

Psychological condition:

The researcher had interest in acquiring more knowledge on the topic and kept in mind the psycho-socio and economical problems of geriatric people living in charitable institutions. Today many geriatric people are thrown out of their houses due to various reasons. Society helps them through

charitable institutions (old age homes) to some extent. Researcher attempted to find out psychosocio and economical problems of geriatric people living in charitable institutions and whether they are happy in that situation. So this keenness motivated the researcher to focus his attention on this topic. The study had fulfilled the objective to know the psychological condition of the respondents with the hypothesis that geriatric people are psychologically disturbed. The study was conducted among the geriatric people of home for aged and handicapped, Untkhana, Nagpur, Maharashtra with descriptive research design. In this research, the researcher used the random number (lottery) method in probability sampling.

Geriatric people not only face physical problems as they are aged, but they also experience psychological problems like rejection, loneliness, isolation, anxiety, stress, guilty etc as well. In this chapter researcher tries to find out what are the psychological problems they really face in the old age home and what extend this problem affect their life.

We see disappointment in some of the geriatric people. Disappointments are dissatisfactions that arise when your expectations are not met by outcomes. Every day, people deal with disappointments. Depending on how big the disappointment is and how you choose to deal with it, the feeling of disappointment may dissipate after a short while or hang over your life for an extended period of time. If not handled properly, disappointments can lead to depression and eventually apathy.

It is clear that geriatric people face mental stress in their life. Some stress can be positive. Research shows that a moderate level of stress makes us perform better. But when it crosses the moderate level, mental stress becomes a problem for everyone. Researcher tries to find out in this chapter how many of the inmates are affected by the psychological problems, so that they can be helped to come out of this situation.

It is to know the mental condition in which the qualities of a state are relatively constant even though the state itself may be dynamic.

Psychological problems of the respondents

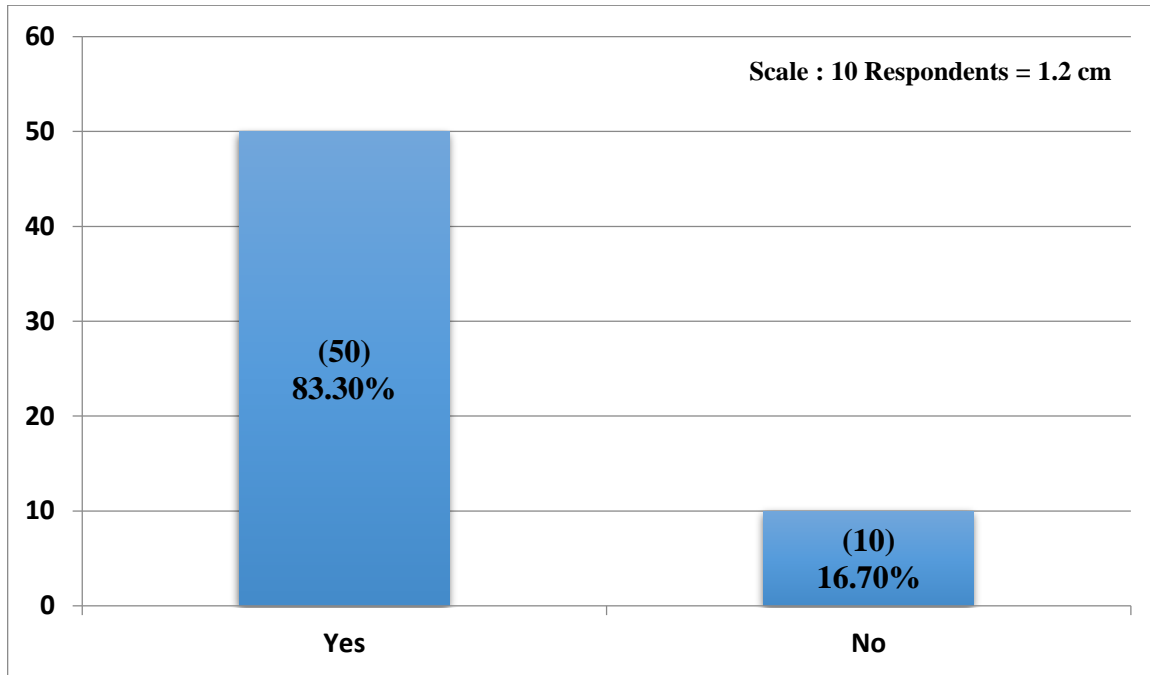
S.N.	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Anxiety	15	25.00
2	Hypertension	15	25.00
3	Depression	15	25.00
4	Aggression	13	21.70
5	Not applicable	2	3.30
	Total	60	100

The above table shows the psychological problems of the respondents. Out of 60 respondents 15 (25.00%) respondents are suffering from anxiety, another 15 (25.00%) respondents are suffering from hypertension, another 15 (25.00%) respondents are suffering from depression, 13 (21.70%) respondents are suffering from aggression and 2 (3.30%) respondents said not applicable.

The above table indicates that, most of the respondents are having psychological problems. The elderly people not only face physical problems as they are aged, but they also experience emotional

challenges as well. Elderly people are faced with stresses that may include living on a reduced retirement income or being unable to care for themselves independently. They may be facing the loss of a spouse, siblings or close friends. Caretakers need to know what to expect regarding the emotions of elderly people and be prepared to help with them.

Psychological disturbance means any psychological problems faced by the respondents through which their normal day today life is affected.



The above column diagram shows the psychological disturbances faced by the respondents. Out of 60 respondents, 50 (83.30%) respondents are psychologically disturbed and 10 (16.70%) respondents are not facing any psychological disturbances.

It is clear that, majority people in old age home suffer from various forms of psychological problems. *The above diagram clearly shows that majority geriatric people 50 (83.30%) are psychologically disturbed. Therefore, the hypothesis 'Geriatric people are psychologically disturbed' is proved beyond any doubts.*

The psychological disturbances in elders need to be addressed. Otherwise it may lead them to social isolation. Social workers can play a vital role in this matter towards the better mental health of geriatric people.

Conclusion:

From the 'psychological aspects of geriatric people' we learned that geriatric people are psychologically disturbed. Majority respondents are feeling worthlessness in their old age. To overcome this one should think that you are valuable for who you are, not for what you do. You were created exclusively by God and for God People in old age home too experience rejection from the society. Majority of them experienced at least sometimes rejection in their present life in the old age home. It is the duty of each society member to make a visit to them and spend some time with the members of the old age home. Majority of the inmates experienced loneliness and isolation sometimes in their life. It

is a process of life. There are lots of coping strategies for dealing with loneliness and isolation. A lot of them depend on what's causing these feelings. Keeping yourself busy is a really effective way of dealing with loneliness.

Majority respondents were unsuccessful in their life. They failed to make a good home, better family and failed to achieve success in their life or failed to keep up what they have achieved in their life. As a result, finally they have landed in old age home. Majority of the respondents felt that their life is somewhat useful. It is to say that they are aware about the usefulness of their life. Most of the respondents are having psychological problems. Caretakers need to know what to expect regarding the emotions of elderly people and be prepared to help with them.

Disappointment is the reflection of your passion toward something, be it a certain goal, dream, desire or outcome. The very presence of disappointment suggests that this is something you care about so much that you would feel bad over it. The higher your disappointment, the stronger your passion for this is. Majority respondents share their feelings with others. It is important to share your feelings with others so that they can help you to the best of their ability and try to understand what you are going through. Majority of the respondents had mental stress in their life. Some stress can be positive. Research shows that a moderate level of stress makes us perform better. But stress is only healthy if it is short-lived. Excessive or prolonged stress can lead to illness and physical and emotional exhaustion.

Many respondents feel the need of psychological support in their life. By providing psychological support we can help the respondents to overcome their struggles some extent and a live a happy life. Majority of the respondents felt guilty in their life. To cope with guilt successfully, you must be fully aware of what actions or events led you to feel that way.

Majority people in old age home suffer from various forms of psychological problems. The psychological disturbances in elders need to be addressed. Otherwise it may lead them to social isolation. Social workers can play a vital role in this matter towards the better mental health of geriatric people.

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