

Satisfaction with Life in Elderly People Living in Rural and Urban Areas of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract

Aim: The aim of the present study is to assess the satisfaction with life in elderly living in rural and urban areas of Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh state.

Study design: exploratory research design was adopted to study the satisfaction with life elderly.

Methodology: Elderly between the age group 65-74 years were selected. Purposive random sampling technique and snow ball technique were used to select the sample from both the rural and urban areas. The total sample comprised of 120 elderly people, (60 from urban and 60 from rural) of both the genders. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Denier *et al.* (1985) was used to assess the satisfaction with life in elderly.

Results: Results revealed that nearly half of the rural elderly respondents expressed slight dissatisfaction and two third of urban elderly showed neutral responses. Among urban and rural elderly, urban elderly showed significantly ($p=0.01$) higher mean score (18.63 ± 2.22) than rural elderly. Although male elderly had higher mean scores (17.33 ± 4.02) than their counterparts non-significant mean differences were found for satisfaction with life.

Conclusion: As satisfaction with life plays a crucial role in healthy ageing, it is important to increase the levels of satisfaction with life through intervention with special focus on female and rural elderly.

Keywords: Satisfaction with life, elderly, urban, rural

Introduction

According to WHO, "aging is an inevitable process, is commonly measured by chronological age and, as a convention, a person aged 65 years or more is often referred to as 'elderly' [10]. Ageing is associated with progressive changes that lead to a decline in physiological functions (de Magalhaes *et al.* 2017) [3]. These progressive changes and decline in functional ability are considered as the challenges for healthy ageing in later life of individuals (Agostino *et al.*, 2021) [2]. The population of elderly persons (aged 60 years or above) in India is 104 million. The state Andhra Pradesh consists of 9.8 percent of elderly persons among the total state population which comes to a total of 82.88 lakh (2011 Census) [13,14]. A report released by the United Nations Population Fund and Indian Aging Report (2017) suggests that the number of elderly persons is expected to grow by 19 percent in 2050 [12]. This rapid increase in the elderly population is becoming a challenge for the family members and governments to ensure the well-being of elderly people. Due to the decline in functional abilities and increased vulnerability to diseases in elderly may be associated with

psychological problems like low self-esteem and self-confidence (Maresova et al. 2019, Antunez et al. 2014) [6,9].

Life satisfaction was defined as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of one’s own life” (Diener et al. 2002) [5]. It is a measure of subjective well-being, which can be assessed in terms of one’s mood, relationship satisfaction, achieved goals, self-concepts and self-perceived ability to cope with life. Life satisfaction also refers to the positive attitude of an individual towards their present and past life. It is important to enhance and maintain the subjective well-being in later life as it affects the life satisfaction and contributes to the healthy ageing (Tian & Chen, 2022) [10]. It also motivates the elderly to maintain subjective well-being and healthy ageing in later life. Keeping the above points in view the present study was aimed to assess the satisfaction with life in elderly living in rural and urban areas of Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology

An exploratory research design was adopted to study the satisfaction with life among elderly.

Population and sampling

The target population consisted of elderly people who were in the age group 65-74 years living in rural and urban areas of Guntur district. Rural sample was selected from Jonnalagadda village of Guntur mandal and urban sample was selected from Guntur city of Guntur district. Purposive random sampling technique and snow ball technique were used to select the sample from both the rural and urban areas. The total sample comprised of 120 elderly people, (60 from urban and 60 from rural) of both the genders.

Nature of data

Quantitative data was used in this study

Tools for data collection

The satisfaction with life in elderly was assessed by using Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Denier *et al.* (1985) [4]. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgements of satisfaction with one’s life. Each item scored on 7-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. On 7-point Likert scale the scoring was given has 7 to Strongly agree, 6-Agree, 5-Slightly agree, 4-Neither agree nor disagree, 3-Slightly Disagree, 2- Disagree and 1-Strongly disagree. Scale scores range from 5-35, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction.

Statistical analysis

Frequencies and percentages were calculated to find out the well-being of elderly. Means, S.D. and t-values were calculated to see the significant differences between means of well-being for area and gender of the respondents. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis.

Results and Discussion:

Satisfaction with life among elderly people

This section describes the distribution of elderly based on satisfaction with life and area.

Table 1 Distribution of rural elderly based on satisfaction with life levels:

n=60

| Level of satisfaction with life | Rural area (n=60) | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male (n=30) | Female (n=30) | Total (n=60) |
| | f (%) | f (%) | f (%) |
| Slightly satisfied | 02 (6.70) | 02 (6.70) | 04 (6.70) |
| Neutral | 06 (20.00) | 02 (6.70) | 08 (13.30) |
| Slightly dissatisfied | 18 (60.00) | 14 (46.60) | 32 (53.30) |
| Dissatisfied | 04 (13.30) | 12 (40.00) | 16 (26.70) |

The data from the table 1. clearly depicts that nearly half (53.3 %) of rural elderly respondents were slightly dissatisfied with life followed by dissatisfied (26.70 %), neutral (13.3 %) and slightly satisfied (6.70 %). Among male and female respondents, more than half (60 %) of the male respondents were slightly dissatisfied followed by neutral, dissatisfied and slightly satisfied, whereas nearly equal per cent of female respondents were slightly dissatisfied (46.6 %) and dissatisfied (40.00%) and the remaining per cent was equally distributed between female respondents who were slightly satisfied (6.70 %) and neutral (6.70 %). This might be due to the low socio-economic status, financial insecurities, raising health problems, poor living arrangements, accomplished goals in life, conflict in personal relationships with family, friends and neighbourhood.

Table 2. Distribution of urban elderly based on satisfaction with life levels:

n=60

| Level of satisfaction with life | Urban area (n=60) | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male (n=30) | Female (n=30) | Total (n=60) |
| | f (%) | f (%) | f (%) |
| Slightly satisfied | 02 (6.70) | 00 (00.00) | 02 (3.30) |
| Neutral | 22 (73.30) | 16 (53.30) | 38 (63.40) |
| Slightly dissatisfied | 06 (20.00) | 14 (46.70) | 20 (33.30) |

From the above table 2, it was observed that nearly two thirds (63.40 %) of urban elderly respondents were neutral for satisfaction with life followed by 33.30 percent were slightly dissatisfied and a meagre were slightly satisfied with their lives. Among male and female respondents, 73.30 percent of male respondents and 53.30 percent of female respondents were neutral for satisfaction with life. Twenty percent and 6.70 percent of the male respondents were slightly dissatisfied and slightly satisfied respectively, whereas remaining 46.70 percent of the female respondents were slightly dissatisfied for satisfaction with life. This might be due to the financial assurance from government pensions and little dependence on their children might be the two leading factors that contributed to the neutral responses of the elderly towards satisfaction with life.

Table 3 Mean differences in satisfaction with life of elderly as per area:

N=120

| Dimension | Area | | F-value |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| | Urban | Rural | |
| | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | |
| Satisfaction with life | 18.63±2.22 | 14.60±4.60 | 4.32** |

**** -p<0.01 level of significance**

Results in the above table depicted the mean differences in satisfaction with life of elderly as per area and revealed statistically significant differences for satisfaction with life between urban and rural respondents at 0.01 level of significance. Results also showed that urban elderly had higher mean scores (18.63±2.22) for satisfaction with life when compared

to rural respondents (14.60±4.60). This indicated that urban respondents had high satisfaction with life than rural respondents. This might be because of the better socio-economic status of the urban elderly that allows them to access health care and meet the needs with less dependency. The above findings were on par with Sorensen (2014) and Tina and Chen (2022) who also found significant differences for life satisfaction between rural and urban senior citizens [8,10].

Table 4 Mean differences in satisfaction with life of elderly as per gender:

N=120

| Dimension | Gender | | F-value |
|------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| | Male | Female | |
| | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | |
| Satisfaction with life | 17.33±4.02 | 15.90±4.16 | 1.36 |

The above table depicts the mean differences in satisfaction with life of elderly and the results unveiled non-significant differences for satisfaction with life between male and female respondents. However, male respondents had higher mean scores (17.33±4.02) than the female respondents (15.90±4.16) which indicates that male respondents had higher levels of satisfaction with life. This might be because of the education, occupation, health and identity that contribute to the life satisfaction in elderly. The above results were on par with Ahmad and Silfiasari (2018) and Tina and Chen (2022) who found non-significant differences for life satisfaction between male and female respondents [1,10]. Priyanka and Mishra (2010) in their study revealed that male respondents had higher life satisfaction when compared to their counterparts [7].

Conclusion:

The present study aimed to assess the satisfaction with life among rural and urban elderly. The results revealed that nearly 50 percent of rural were slightly dissatisfied with their lives followed by dissatisfied, neutral and slightly satisfied. Nearly two thirds of the urban had neutral level of satisfaction with life followed by slightly dissatisfied and slightly satisfied. Statistically significant differences were found with satisfaction with life for area and non-significant differences for gender. It is important to enhance the satisfaction with life in elderly as it plays a crucial role in healthy ageing.

Limitations:

- The present study was confined to only 120 elderly people, 60 each from rural and urban areas, it can be studied on large sample to draw generalizations.
- The study was confined to only young old elderly rather than old-old and oldest old.

Suggestions for the future study:

- A study of similar nature could be taken up on elderly under institutional care and also from different districts of Andhra Pradesh state.
- A comparative study could be taken up between the satisfaction with life in elderly people under home care and institutional care.
- A comparative study could be taken up between young old, old-old and oldest old categories of late adulthood.

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