

“A STUDY TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG ELDERLY IN SELECTED URBAN AND RURAL AREAS”

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ABSTRACT

The present study was done to assess the quality of life among elderly in selected urban and rural areas, to compare the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas and to find the association between quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas with selected socio demographic variables. The sample consist of 100 elderlies, 50 from urban area and 50 from rural area, selected by multistage random sampling technique. The design used was comparative descriptive design with quantitative approach. Structured Interview schedule on socio demographic data was used to assess the sample characteristics whereas quality of life was assessed using WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire respectively. The findings of the study depict that, 46% of elderly in urban area and 52% of elderly in rural area having good quality of life. The study revealed that there was significant difference ($t= 2.26, p=0.000$) between quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas. The study also states that there was a significant association between quality of life among elderly residing in urban and rural area with sociodemographic variables ($p < 0.05$) except gender and educational status ($P > 0.05$). The present study concluded that QOL of elderly can be improved by providing financial security, ensuring care and by enhancing social relationships.

Key words: *Quality of life; Elderly*

Date of Submission: 14-11-2021

Date of acceptance: 29-11-2021

INTRODUCTION

“Celebrating Older Human Rights Champions” is the theme of the 2018 United Nations International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP). This point out the significance of promoting the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by older persons.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The ageing process is a biological reality which has its own dynamic, largely beyond human control. According to Erikson’s “Eight stage of life Theory”, he characterizes old age as a period of “Integrity Vs despair”. Quality of life is a broad concept covering the individual’s physical health, mental state, level of independence, social relationships, spiritual beliefs and the environment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A study to assess the quality of life among elderly in selected urban and rural areas in Kottayam district

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

1. Assess the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas
2. Compare the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas
3. Find the association between quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas with selected socio demographic variables

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

Operational Definition

An operational definition of a concept specifies the operation that the researcher must perform to collect required information

Quality of life:

In this study, quality of life refers to individual’s perception of their own position in life in context of the culture and value system in which they live. In relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns, which are briefed to domain such as physical health, psychological health, social relationship and environment which is measured by WHOQOL – BREF questionnaire.

Elderly:

In this study, elderly refers to the people in the age group of 60 or above residing in home environment.

Urban area:

In this study, urban area refers to a city or town with large geographical area of different age group population.

Rural area:

In this study, rural area refers to a village with small geographical area of different age group population.

HYPOTHESES

All the hypotheses are tested at 0.05 level of significance

- H₁** : There is a significant difference between the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas
H₂ : There is a significant association between the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural areas with selected social demographic variables.

ASSUMPTIONS

- The quality of life among elderly is different in urban and rural areas
- The quality of life among elderly is different in four domains of quality of life

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2014 to compare the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural area in the municipality of Uberaba, Brazil. About 2142 elderly from urban area and 850 elderly from rural area were enrolled in the study, through convenience sampling. WHOQOL-BREF and WHOQOL-OLD was used to determine the quality of life. The study findings revealed that 64.8% of elderly in urban area and 59.5% of elderly in rural area were reported good quality of life. When comparing the quality of life domains, it was observed that the elderly in rural areas had scores significantly higher than urban ones in physical ($\beta = 0.23$; $p < 0.001$), in psychological ($\beta = 0.10$; $p < 0.001$) and in social relationship domain ($\beta = 1.65$; $P < 0.001$). The findings from the study also revealed that 55.7% of elderly in urban and rural area belonged to 60-70 years of age group, 65.2% of elderly in urban area and 65.5% of elderly in rural area were females, 76.5% of elderly in urban area and 68.3% of elderly in rural area had primary education, 43.2% of elderly in urban and rural area depend up on monthly income and 43.2% of elderly in urban area lived with children, however highest percentage of elderly in rural area lived with spouse. The study concluded that quality of life of elderly differs based on their area of residence.

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2013 to find the association of activity and participation with quality of life between Japanese older adults living in urban and rural areas. About 830 elderlies were enrolled in the study, 550 elderly from urban area and 280 elderly from rural area through convenience sampling. QOL was assessed by WHOQOL-BREF and WHOQOL-OLD. The study result depicted that majority of elderly living in urban and rural area was reported poor quality of life. The findings from the study also depicted that elderly living in urban area reported better quality of life than elderly living in rural area in the physical ($t=3.88$, $P<0.01$), psychological ($t=4.05$, $P<0.01$) and environmental domains ($t=8.21$, $P<0.01$). The study result concluded that QOL states and related occupational routine differed between urban and rural areas.

METHODOLOGY**RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is the blue print for conducting a study. The research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance
The research design selected for the present study was descriptive comparative study design.

SETTING OF THE STUDY

Setting is the physical location and condition in which data collection takes place in a study.

The comparative study was conducted in selected urban and rural areas of Kottayam district. The Kottayam District was divided into urban and rural zones according to the administration. There are 6 municipalities and 75 panchayath’s in Kottayam district. From, this Pala municipality and Athirampuzha panchayath was selected.

POPULATION

A population is the entire aggregation of cases in which a researcher is interested.

Population in the present study is the elderly in selected urban and rural areas of Kottayam district.

SAMPLE SIZE

Sample may be defined as representative unit of a target population. In other words, sample consists of subsets of units which comprise the population selected by investigators or researchers to participate in their research project. The samples selected for the study are 50 elderly from urban area and 50 elderly from rural areas

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion to represent the entire population. The sampling technique used in this study is multistage random sampling technique. It is a type of probability sampling.

CRITERIA FOR SAMPLE SELECTION

The list of characteristics essential for membership in the target population is called sampling criteria. It includes of both inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria

Elderly who are,

- Willing to participate
- Present at the time of study

Exclusion criteria

Elderly who are

- Cognitively impaired

TOOLS:

The tool was prepared based on the objectives of the study. In this study the data collection instruments used are,

Tool 1: Structured Interview schedule on socio demographic data

Tool 2: WHOQOL– BREF questionnaire.

Total score is: 100

For the research analysis purpose, quality of life scores were graded as follows.

Poor : 0-33

Average: 34-66

Good : 67-100

RESULTS

The Independent ‘t’ test was used to compare the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural area. The quality of life among elderly in urban and rural area is 56.76 and 63.38 respectively. There is significant difference ($t=2.26$, $P=0.025$) in the quality of life among elderly in urban and rural area. The mean value of quality of life among elderly in rural area is higher than that of elderly in urban area.

CONCLUSION

The present study was aimed to assess the quality of life among elderly in selected urban and rural areas of Kottayam district.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

In the study the acquired mean score of quality of life among elderly in urban area is 56.76 and in rural area is 63.38.

Hence it depicts that the elderly quality of life in urban and rural area belongs to average Category.

NURSING IMPLICATIONS

The study findings have implications in the field of nursing education, nursing practice, nursing administration and nursing research.

Nursing education

Nursing education consists of the theoretical and practical training provided to nurses with the purpose to prepare them for their duties as nursing care professionals.

- Nurse educators can teach the students about geriatric assessment.
- Nurse educators can help the students to provide holistic care to the community and help them to emphasize the health needs of elderly in the community.

Nursing practice

Nurses are the back bone of health care team. Nurses can assess the quality of life among elderly and help the elderly to use strategies to improve their quality of life.

- The nurses should provide appropriate health services and counselling to improve the quality of life of elderly.
- The nurses should provide a comprehensive attention in meeting the needs of the elderly and should also provide adequate social, economical, physical and psychological support.

Nursing administration

- The nurse administrator can develop special support groups that consist of health staff as well as family members where they can share their knowledge, experience and ways to handle elderly.
- The nursing administrators can arrange and conduct workshops, conferences and in-service education programs on the importance of quality of life among elderly

Nursing research

Nursing research is an important part of nursing as it improves the quality of nursing profession by incorporating evidence based interventions in nursing care to ensure the quality care.

- The nurse researcher can undertake studies to investigate the services and resources available for the elderly and their utilization.
- The nurse researcher can conduct research studies on identification of the aspects of nutritional status and physical activity of elderly.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the findings of the present study, the following recommendations have been made for the further study.

- A similar study can be replicated on a large sample with different demographic variables.
- Periodic health check-ups can be organized for the elderly population through sub centre, PHC & CHC to provide comprehensive health service.
- Medical officers in the PHC & CHC can be trained in geriatrics.

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