

Psychological status of institutionalized elders in Elders' Home Kaithady, Jaffna

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Background: The proportion of elders in the general population is rising. As there is an increasing psychological risk with advanced age, the number of psychologically affected elders is also rising. The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence and factors influencing cognitive impairment, depression, anxiety, stress and perceived satisfaction among elders residing in Elders' Home Kaithady, Jaffna.

Methods: This study was a descriptive cross-sectional institutional based study at Elders' Home Kaithady carried out between November 2017 and March 2018. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The Montreal Cognitive Assessment tool (MoCA) was used to assess objective cognitive decline, and DASS 21 was used to assess depression, anxiety and stress. SPSS 23 was used to analyze data. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna.

Results: The response rate was 91.3% with 47.9% (n=80) and 52.1% (n=87) of the sample being males and females respectively. The mean age was 70.3 years with over half (55.7%) being below 70 years of age. More than 75% had not studied beyond the primary level. About half (49.1%, n=82) reported being married; 13 elders (7.8%) were divorced, 4 elders (2.4%) were separated and 13 elders (7.8%) were widowed. Assessment of psychological status revealed that 6 elders (3.6%) had severe depression and 4 (2.4%) had extremely severe depression. Fifteen elders (9.0%) had severe anxiety and 15 (9.0%) had extremely severe anxiety. Sixteen elders (9.6%) had moderate stress, and one (0.6%) had severe stress with none having extremely severe stress. Twelve elders (43.1%) had mild cognitive impairment, 88 elders (52.7%) had moderate cognitive impairment. Only about half of the sample (50.3%, n=84) were satisfied with the facilities available at the home and its environment. Level of life perceived satisfaction with satisfied level greater than (50.3%) unsatisfied level (1.2%). Severe depression was greater among elders below 60 years of age (4%) than those above 60 years (3.5%). Anxiety was greater among elders below 60 years (12%) than those above 60 years (8%). Stress levels did not significantly differ by age.

Conclusions: Depression, anxiety, and stress are fairly prevalent and a large proportion of institutionalized elders have cognitive impairment. About half of the sample reported being unsatisfied with the facilities available to them at Elders' Home Kaithady. Urgent steps need to be taken to improve the quality of life of institutionalized elders in Jaffna.

Key words: Institutionalized elders, depression, anxiety, stress, cognitive impairment, satisfaction.