

A Study on Physical Symptoms and Self-Esteem in accordance to Socio-demographic Characteristics - Centered around elderly residents of nursing homes -

Jung-Hee Choi¹, Sung-Je Cho²

¹Dept. of Education, Dongbang Culture Graduate University
60, Sungbuk-ro 28-gil, Sungbuk-Ku, Seoul 136-823, KOREA
mela00@nate.com.

²Dept. of Education, Dongbang Culture Graduate University
60, Sungbuk-ro 28-gil, Sungbuk-Ku, Seoul 136-823, KOREA
Corresponding Author: chosj715@daum.net.

Abstract. The purpose of this study is to comprehend the physical symptoms as well as the self-esteem of the elderly residents of nursing homes in accordance to their socio-demographic characteristics. For this study a survey was conducted on the city of Seoul. The analysis results showed that, first, there was a significant difference between the results of self-esteem in accordance to the general characteristics of the elderly residents and the self-esteem in accordance to the elderly families' monthly income, marital status, age, and level of education. Second, the result of examining the physical symptoms of the elderly residents in accordance to their socio-demographic characteristics revealed a difference depending on the respondent's marital status, level of education, and economic power. Consequently, self-esteem was lower the more severe the physical symptoms. The implication of this study is that the self-esteem of the elderly residents of nursing homes, in accordance to their socio-demographic characteristics, is lower the more severe their physical symptoms, and therefore a policy concerning the improvement of each elderly resident's physical symptoms is required.

Keywords: Physical symptoms, self-esteem, nursing home, elderly residents

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Necessity

After our country entered into an elderly society interest concerning the elderly has increased, and welfare policies have also changed in a variety of ways. Elderly residents of nursing homes experience all sorts of stress from the process of leaving the family that they've lived with their whole lives and adapting to a new environment. The self-esteem of the elderly residents of nursing homes has been revealed to be influenced by their current marital status, number of children, and level of education[1]. Also, in terms of relation to their social capital and self-esteem, it has

been revealed to be influenced by public trust, public network, and norms, and females have been revealed to have higher self-esteem than males[2].

The depression, self-esteem, and health-related behavior of the elderly contribute to the development of health programs for the elderly. Various programs are being developed by health and welfare facilities for the promotion of health, and require devotion to bringing them to application[3].

In addition, it was revealed that while those who have high self-esteem believe that they are leading a meaningful life, those with lower self-esteem believe that they are living an unstable and passive life[4]. Though many previous studies have conducted research concerning the daily life skills, self-esteem, and level of lifestyle satisfaction of the elderly residents[1,2,3,4], these studies are not able to present the clear influence that they have on their physical symptoms and self-esteem. This study hopes to conduct research on the influence that socio-demographic characteristics have on the self-esteem and physical symptoms of the elderly residents of nursing homes.

1.2 Research Problems

The specific research problems of this study are as follows.

First, how is the self-esteem of the elderly residents of nursing homes in accordance to their socio-demographic characteristics?

Seconds, how are the physical symptoms of the elderly residents of nursing homes in accordance to their general characteristics?

2 Research Method

2.1 Research Subjects and Design

The study subjects were 110 elderly residents in Seoul on whom the survey was conducted.

2.2 Research Method

After sufficient explanation regarding the survey's purpose and questionnaire, the survey was conducted in a self-administered manner.

2.3 Research Tools

2.3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics

The research was conducted by revising and supplementing the questionnaire developed by the Community Health Survey [5].

2.3.2 Physical Symptoms and Self-esteem Scale

A revision and supplementation of the Community Health Survey's[5] diagnostic measurement tools was used for the physical symptoms scale, and a revision and supplementation of the questionnaire developed by Lazarus and Delongis[6] and adapted by Jung-Hee Kim[7] was used for the self-esteem scale.

2.3.4 Credibility

The measurement tool of credibility used in this study was applied by analyzing Cronbach's α coefficient, with a score of 0.6 and above generally indicating relatively high credibility. The credibility of this study showed a high score of 0.8.

3 Research Results

3.1.4 Socio-demographic Characteristics

3.1.1 The Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Research Subjects

Out of the respondents, there were more females in regards to sex, the majority had a marital status of bereavement, children were the financial support for many, sons were the caretakers of the elderly residents for many, and contact with children was once a week, followed by siblings and then friends. Respondents who had a spouse, had a high level of education, received financial support from their spouse, had a high frequency of contact with children and friends, and had a high income revealed to have a higher self-esteem.

3.1.2 The Difference in Physical Symptoms in Accordance to General Characteristics

Respondents who either had no spouse or were older, had been alone for a long time and had a low level of education, whose children financially supported them and who

did not contact their friends, and whose caretaker was their daughter rather than their son revealed to have more severe physical symptoms.

3.1.3 The Influence of Physical Symptoms on Self-esteem

Self-esteem was revealed to have a negative correlation with physical symptoms. Thus, the more severe the physical symptoms, the lower the self-esteem.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

This study analyzed the influence that socio-demographic characteristics have on the physical symptoms and self-esteem of elderly residents of nursing homes.

First, the level of self-esteem in accordance to the socio-demographic characteristics of the elderly revealed a difference according to their living conditions, allowance level, health awareness, group membership as well as closeness with children, and level of education [1,2].

Second, the physical symptoms in accordance to the socio-demographic characteristic of the elderly revealed concurrence with their living conditions, monthly allowance, allowance level, health awareness, group membership, and closeness with children [1], and revealed a significant correlation between their health condition and level of family support[2].

Based on the above results, the following is proposed.

First, concerning the factor of decreasing the physical symptoms of the elderly in accordance to their socio-demographic characteristics, a customized service is required in order to improve their physical symptoms.

Second, concerning the factor of increasing the self-esteem of the elderly in accordance to their socio-demographic characteristics, a customized service is required for each factor in order to improve their self-esteem.

In the future, research concerning the emotional self-esteem of the elderly residents of nursing homes is required.

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