

QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHALAKUDY BLOCK PANCHAYAT, THRISSUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the quality of life (QOL) among elderly individuals, focusing on key factors such as physical health, mental well-being, social support, and environmental conditions. With the aging population growing due to increased life expectancy, particularly in developing regions, understanding the challenges faced by the elderly is vital. Data was collected from 250 elderly individuals in Chalakudy Block Panchayat, Thrissur District using the WHOQOL-BREF scale and a socio-demographic questionnaire. Findings revealed that while overall QOL was rated good to excellent, issues like limited access to healthcare, low education levels, and social isolation impacted specific domains—especially in rural areas. The study also referenced related literature highlighting loneliness and declining health as major contributors to lower QOL. It concludes with recommendations such as mobile healthcare services, enhanced social support, and policies promoting dignity and independence for the elderly, ensuring they can age with purpose and improved well-being.

KEYWORDS: Quality of Life (QOL), Elderly, Aging Population, Physical Health, Mental Well-being, Social Support, Environmental Conditions

INTRODUCTION

The quality of life for elderly individuals involves their overall well-being, encompassing physical health, mental health, social connections, and ability to participate in daily activities and enjoy life. Quality of life is a multidimensional concept that encompasses physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and economic stability. It is not merely the absence of disease but the ability to lead a fulfilling and dignified life. For elderly individuals, quality of life becomes even more critical as they face unique challenges such as declining health, reduced mobility, social isolation, and financial insecurity. The concept of aging should not be viewed solely through the lens of limitations but as an opportunity to promote well-being, independence, and active participation in society. This study explores the factors that

shape the quality of life among elderly individuals and highlights strategies to enhance their overall well-being, ensuring they can age with dignity and purpose.

One of the most important demographic issues that has attracted much attention is the aging of the population. Economic and social development, medical advances, declining fertility rates, and increasing life expectancy have led to significant changes in the structure of the world's population in recent years. During this period, the number of elderly people has increased significantly, especially in developing countries. Aging is an inevitable process that brings about changes in physical, psychological, and social aspects of life. With advancements in healthcare, life expectancy has increased, leading to a growing elderly population. However, longer life does not necessarily equate to a better quality of life. This study explores the factors that contribute to or hinder the well-being of elderly individuals and suggests ways to improve their living conditions.

The World Health Organization's Study on Global Ageing and Adult Health (SAGE). SAGE conducted extensive data collection in India, resulting in a nationally representative cohort of individuals aged 50 years and older, along with a comparative group aged 18 to 49. The study encompassed 12,198 respondents from India, providing valuable insights into the factors influencing the quality of life among the elderly.

Importance of Quality of Life Among Elderly Individuals

Ensuring a good quality of life for elderly individuals is essential for their overall well-being and dignity. It affects not only their physical health but also their emotional and mental state. A high quality of life can lead to increased longevity, reduced healthcare costs, and a more fulfilling life experience. Moreover, elderly individuals with a better quality of life tend to remain active and engaged in their communities, contributing positively to society. Prioritizing their well-being fosters a compassionate and inclusive society that values aging as a natural and respected stage of life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Emitis Jazayeri , Shahla Kazemipour Et al., (2023)** A cross-sectional study in Mazandaran assessed the physical, mental, and social health of 390 elderly individuals (≥ 65 years) using the SF-36 survey

and face-to-face interviews. Results showed 40.7% had below-average physical performance, 18.9% had poor mental health, and 17% had low social performance. Pearson correlation indicated a significant link between health factors and quality of life ($p < 0.01$). Findings suggest that elderly health status in Mazandaran falls short of WHO standards. Efforts are needed to improve aging health indicators in the region.

- **Singh, Kalpana; Srivastava, S. K.(2014)** Old age, often called the "second childhood," brings dependency and increased loneliness. This study examined the correlation between loneliness and quality of life among 50 elderly individuals (25 males, 25 females). Results showed a significant correlation, with females experiencing higher loneliness and lower quality of life than males. Factors like spousal loss, family separation, and social isolation contribute to loneliness. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving elderly well-being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

This study examines the quality of life (QOL) among elderly individuals in urban and rural Bangalore, highlighting disparities due to healthcare access, social support, and economic factors. Rural elderly face lower QOL compared to their urban counterparts, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. Understanding these differences can guide policies to improve elderly well-being, especially in underserved areas.

Objectives of the Study

- To know the sociodemographic profile of the respondents.
- To assess the overall quality of life among elderly individuals.
- To identify the key challenges faced by elderly individuals.
- To examine the impact of social support on the quality of life of elderly.
- To provide recommendations for improving the quality of life among elderly individuals.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study.

Universe of the Study

The Universe of the study is encompasses all elderly people within a age range from 60 years and above Chalakudy Block Panchayat, Thrissur District

Sampling Size & Method

In this research study the researcher adapted the Non-Probability Sampling Method in which the researcher used the Convenient Sampling method for collecting the data from the sample. The sample size is 250 from Chalakudy Block Panchayat, Thrissur District.

Tools of Data Collection

Tools such as socio-demographic data sheet and QOL scale were administered to obtain the data. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher incorporating socio-demographic data sheet and WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire were administered to obtain the data.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Total 250 geriatric age group people (age 60 years or more) were included in the study. Mean age of the study population was 65.8 years with standard deviation of 5 years. Number of people belonged to age group 60–64 was (45.6%) while (41.2%) were between 65- and 70-years age. Only 8% were above 75 years. Female preponderance was found in our study with 57.6% as compared to males 42.4%. People who were married and having spouse alive, constitute 64.4% whereas 28% were either widow or widower. Educational status of study population showed that 35.6% were illiterate while half of the geriatrics, 52.4% was primary educated. Only nine (3.6%) were graduates or above graduate. Twenty percent (20%) were living retired life, whereas (28%) and (17.8%) were unskilled and skilled workers.

- Distribution of preference of health-care facility by the respondents ($n=250$)

	Frequency (%)
Preferred health-care facility ($n=250$)	
Government	190 (76)
Both government and private	36 (14.8)
Private	24 (9.2)
Reason for nonuse of government facility ($n=24$)	
No doctors available	16 (66.6)
Uncooperative staff	4 (16.7)
Far from home	4 (16.7)

- Grading and mean scores of QOL as per WHO-QOL-BREF scoring ($n=250$)

Overall grading: QOL	
Grades	Frequency(%)
Excellent (110-89)	102 (50.8)
Good (88-67)	140 (56.0)
Fair (45-66)	8 (3.2)
Poor (<45)	0
Total	250 (100)

Mean score: Domains of QOL

SUGGESTIONS

Quality of life among elderly people depends on several factors, including physical health, mental well-being, social connections, and financial stability. Maintaining an active lifestyle, having access to healthcare, and engaging in social activities can significantly enhance their overall well-being. Emotional support from family and friends, along with opportunities for lifelong learning and hobbies, helps prevent loneliness and depression. A safe and comfortable living environment, proper nutrition, and access to community services also play a crucial role. Governments and societies must focus on policies and programs that promote dignity, independence, and happiness among the elderly to ensure they lead fulfilling lives.

CONCLUSION

The physical, psychological, environmental, and social domains were compared for various demographic and social characteristics. Geriatric population surveyed under this study had suffered from various morbidities. They found difficult to reach government facility due to various reasons, one of it was distance they need to travel. In such instances, specifically for minor illnesses, government health services can be provided by mobile medical van at their door step at regular interval. Overall QOL was good to excellent, but environmental domain was not up to the mark which can be improved by collective efforts from family as well as by network of geriatric support groups. Social characteristics such as education, marital status, and gender all play role for the perceived QOL among the respondents. Positive outcome in the QOL could be achieved if level of education is improved in the society.

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