Predictors of Depression among Institutionalized Elderly Clients in Selected Elderly Facilities in CEBU, Philippines

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Abstract

The elderly population is considered vulnerable to stress. The relationship between age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, self-esteem, social support and level of depression among elderly clients who are admitted in Home for the Aged was investigated. It was hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, self-esteem, social support and level of depression among institutionalized elderly clients. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design data were gathered from thirty-seven (37) respondents in two geriatric facilities. A researcher-administered questionnaire was utilized containing the demographic data, Self-esteem Scale adapted from Rosenberg (1986), Berlin Social Support Scale adopted from Schwarzer and Schulz (2000) and Geriatric Depression Scale (Brink and Yesavage, 1982). Findings revealed that majority of the respondents who were institutionalized were female, single and had acquired elementary level in terms of education with a mean age of 76 years. Respondents had moderate self-esteem, adequate social support and a depression level between moderate to severe. Only social support showed a significant correlation with depression. Although social support is a necessary element for the prevention of depression among institutionalized geriatric clients there are still other factors to consider as possible predictors of depression among the elderly.

Keywords: Depression, Institutionalized Elderly.
Background and Rationale

Aging is a phenomenon that everyone has to go through in life. The elderly population is considered vulnerable to stress of different kinds. One common stereotype of growing older is that there is a high chance of becoming depressed. This stereotype has fostered the exploration of depression as a natural aspect of aging and how depression and age are related. During the past decade, there have been significant research findings concerning depression among the aging population and the aged.

Psychologists aim to find answers to numerous questions concerning depression in the aging population. This is such a major public health concern. New research findings have suggested that depression in late life occurs in the context of numerous social, physical, and related disability problems (Meyers & Young, 1997).

A widespread belief is that depression is a natural consequence of aging but according to Meyers & Young (1997) it is not. Although depression in elderly might be difficult to determine because it is often masked by physical condition, and dementia among others, yet, there is a need to determine its existence among the elderly since they need care which are appropriate to their developmental needs.

Depression affects the quality of life of the elderly in other ways. It can substantially increase the likelihood of death from physical illnesses, increase impairment from a medical disorder and impede its improvement, while psychological treatment frequently improves the treatment success rate for a variety of medical conditions. Untreated depression can interfere with a patient’s ability to follow the necessary treatment regimen or to participate in a rehabilitation program. Moreover, healthcare costs of elderly people with significant symptoms of depression are roughly 50% higher than those who are not. Depression basically affects the total functioning of a person (NMIH, 2005).

Elderly patients who are placed in institutions of care are prone to depression since they are mostly away from their families or do not have families at all. They are left to the care of strangers whom they gradually learn to accept as their daily social groups and sometimes they consider them as their family. There are factors that one should investigate e.g. those that contribute to the development of depression among the elderly who are institutionalized. In doing so, caregivers can provide anticipatory care to these clients who may develop depression. Therefore, these is a need to determine the factors that predict the occurrence of depression among elderly clients in geriatric institutions particularly in Cebu City, Philippines thus this study was undertaken.

Problem

The relationship between age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, self-esteem, social support and level of depression among elderly client admitted in Home for the Aged in selected facilities in Cebu City, Philippines including the variables that predict geriatric depression.

Methodology

A descriptive - correlational design was used, with simple correlational methods and multiple regression analysis.

This study took place in Hospicio de San Jose in Barili, Cebu, Philippines and Durano Foundation in Danao, Cebu, Philippines. These institutions provided permission and full support to the implementation of the study.
A researcher-administered questionnaire was utilized in the study. These included Part I personal data such as age, highest educational attainment, marital status of the respondent; Part II contained the Self-esteem Scale, Part III contained the Berlin Social Support Scale and Part IV contained the Geriatric Depression Scale.

Universal sampling was utilized in the study in as much as only a limited number of elderly clients were admitted at the Hospicio de San Jose (Barili) and Durano Foundation (Danao) at the time of data collection. Originally, only geriatric clients within the age range of 60-70 were identified, however it was noted that most of the clients in the two institutions were above 70 years of age so the age range was increased from 60 to above 90 as long as the respondents were admitted in either of the two homes for the aged; able to talk and were oriented to time, person and place. There were a total of 37 respondents.

Findings

Data showed that majority of the respondents who were institutionalized were female, single and have acquired only an elementary level of education. This profile implies that single women who do not have immediate families of their own way have been left behind by their after siblings and have not acquired stable jobs due to low educational qualifications. This profile also implies the significance of the role of family members who are instrumental in the care of these elderly family members in their home settings.

The mean age of the respondents was 76 indicating that they were on the later stage of retirement. According to Duvall, at this stage, geriatric clients are expected to be enjoying time for themselves and reaping the fruits of their long years of working.

Yet, it was observed that majority of the clients were not receiving any retirement benefits, on the comforts of living with a family.

The self-esteem measurement revealed that majority of the respondents had moderate self-esteem. None of them reported high self-esteem which meant that the respondents had certain degree of insecurity in unknown aspects. Meyers & Young and Eldercare Online support this result that elderly clients experience a sense of low self-esteem due to depression. These respondents attributed a moderate level of self-esteem because of the support provided by the institution’s caregivers and other volunteers who visit and take care of them.

Most of the respondents reported adequate social support while a minority showed highly adequate support. This was expected in these clients since most of them did not have family members as evidenced by their institutionalization. Some of them have relatives who visit them but not as often the respondents would want them. Moreover, most of the respondents are single thus, support from others is seldom expected.

The data revealed that majority of the respondents have either mild to severe depression. This result is supported by Ostbye, Kristjansson, Hill, Newman, Brouwer and McDowell (2005) who found that elderly clients experience certain levels of depression.

From among the independent variables that correlated with level of depression, social support showed a significant correlation at p = .00, r = .42. With this result, the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social support and depression is accepted while the other alternative hypotheses rejected. This implies that social support has a significant influence on the level of depression among geriatric clients.
Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained, social support is a necessary element in the upliftment of the well-being of an individual most specially for elderly clients who are institutionalized. Furthermore, institutionalized geriatric clients are found to have higher tendencies to develop depression specially those who lack support from the caregivers and family members.

Recommendation

From these conclusions the following recommendations are presented:

1. Families of patients in geriatric institutions should be involved in the care of the clients;
2. Geriatric institutions should provide recreational activities that will help channel negative emotions of clients thoughts positive means;
3. Caregivers should be trained to provide empathic and sensitive and to geriatric clients.
4. A government - financed geriatric facility should be established in Cebu City, Philippines to cater to the growing number of decreased geriatric clients. The Department of Health and Department of Social Welfare and Development should intensify their programs for geriatric health and social welfare including those who are institutionalized.

References


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