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A study of self-acceptance among elderly females: With reference to physical activity

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compare the self acceptance dimension of mental health among elderly females of Jammu and Kashmir. For this study 500 elderly females of Jammu and Kashmir were selected. To access the dimension of mental health, self acceptance positive mental health inventory prepared by Agashe and Helode (2007) was used. It consists of 30 questions. It was found that Self understanding, awareness of own strength and weakness and realistic approach i.e. self acceptance in elderly females engaged in regular physical activity was found to be significantly higher as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle. It was concluded that regular physical activity helps the elderly females to understand their strengths, also recognize their own weaknesses.

Keywords: Self acceptance, mental Health and physical activity

Introduction

Self-acceptance is acceptance of self i.e. accepting own weakness and strength. Self acceptance as defined by Shephard (1979) means happiness of individual with himself/herself and a necessary element for positive mental health. To understand our strength but also recognize our weakness along with pragmatic awareness of self is also self acceptance. In positive psychology when a person confesses own weakness or imperfection, it is considered as self acceptance.

Physical activity: Physical activity is associated with a range of health benefits, and its absence can have harmful effects on health and well being, increasing the risk for coronary heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, obesity, hypertension and all cause mortality (CDC 1996). Physical inactivity may also be associated with the development of mental disorders: some clinical and epidemiological studies have shown associations between physical activity and symptoms of depression and anxiety in cross sectional and prospective-longitudinal studies (Abu-Omar *et al.*).

Review of related literature

Park *et al.* (2009) compared physical and psychological wellbeing of elderly people on the basis of their gardening activities. Short-Form 36 Health Survey (SF-36), dynamometers and bone mineral density test was used for data collection. It was found that physical health of elderly engaged in gardening was significantly superior as compared to non-gardener while no significant different difference was observed in mental health of gardeners and non gardeners. Perceived self efficacy and mental health among elderly was assessed in a study by Singh *et al.* (2010). 80 elderly males and 80 elderly females were selected as sample. Measures of Perceived Self Efficacy (PSE) and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) were used to collect psychological data. Comparative statistics reveals that self efficacy and mental health in elderly males was significantly superior as compared elderly females. The younger elderly group exhibited more magnitude of self efficacy and mental health as compared to older age group elderly subjects. Another finding suggests that elderly who perceive themselves self efficacious to have control over their environment reported better mental health.

Objective

To compare dimensions of mental health namely self acceptance among elderly Muslim women on the basis of their participation in regular physical activity.

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Hypothesis

Elderly females with regular physical activity will significantly possess more magnitude self acceptance as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle.

Methodology

Samples: To conduct the study 500 elderly Muslim females were selected. The age range of selected elderly females was between 60 to 70 years of age. Sample comprise of 250 physically active elderly Muslim women (Ave. age 64.11 yrs) and 250 elderly Muslim women with sedentary lifestyle (Ave. age 63.23 yrs.). Only native elderly Muslim women of Jammu and Kashmir were purposively selected for the present study. Walking, light exercise, recreational activities and yoga on

regular basis were considered as physical activity apart from day-to-day work. Purposive sampling was used for selection of sample.

Tools

Mental Health Inventory: To measure the self acceptance dimension of mental health, three dimensional positive mental health inventory (namely self acceptance, ego strength and philosophy of life) prepared by Agashe and Helode (2007) was used. It consists of 36 questions. The test-retest reliability coefficient of this inventory is 0.723.

Results

Table 1: Comparison of Mental Health Dimension self acceptance among Elderly Females on the basis of Regular Physical Activity

Dimensions of Mental Health	Elderly Females with Regular Physical Activity (N=250)		Elderly Females with Sedentary Lifestyle (N=250)		Mean Diff.	‘t’
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Self Acceptance	9.97	2.31	5.88	2.52	4.08	18.87**

A perusal of entries reported in table 1 reveals statistically significant difference in self acceptance of elderly females on the basis of physical activity status. It was observed that self understanding, was found to be significantly superior in elderly females engaged in regular physical activity (M=9.97) as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle (M=5.88).

The calculated t=18.87 also proves this finding scientifically at .01 level of statistical significance that elderly females engaged in regular physical activity showed superiority over elderly females with sedentary lifestyle on self acceptance dimension of mental health.

The results are also shown in figure 3.

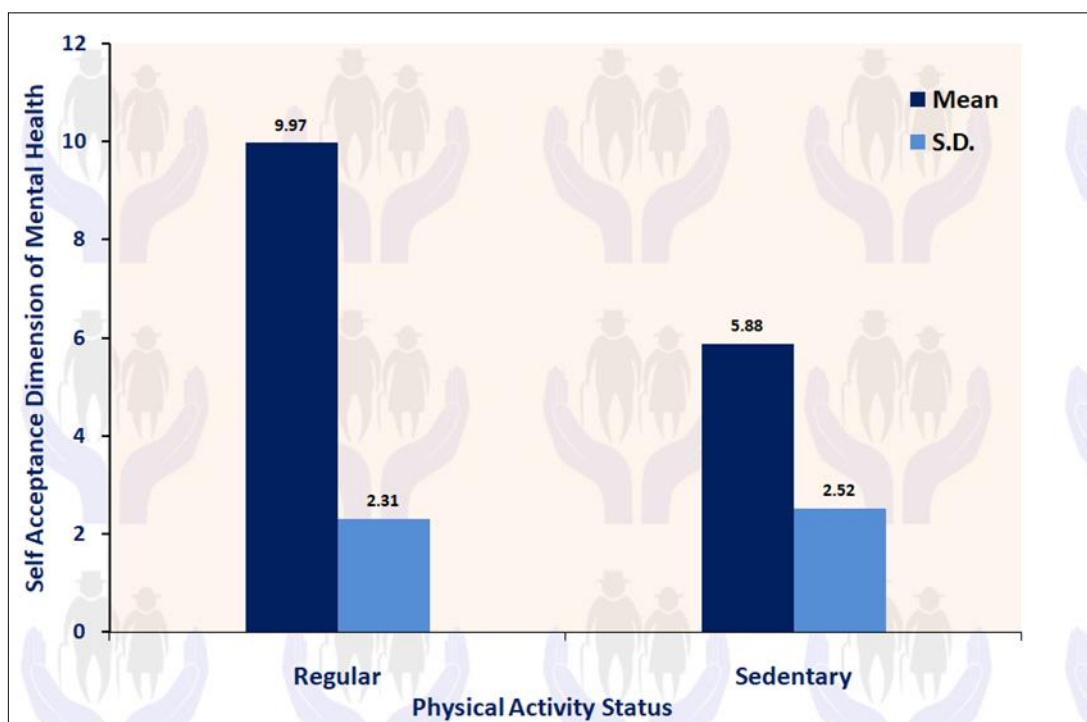


Fig 3: Bar Diagram Showing Comparison of Self Acceptance Dimension of Mental Health among Elderly Females on the basis of Physical Activity Status

A perusal of entries reported in table A reveals statistically significant difference in self acceptance, a dimension of mental health of elderly females on the basis of physical activity status. It was observed that self acceptance was found to be significantly superior in elderly females engaged in regular physical activity (M=9.97) as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle (M=5.88).

The calculated t=18.87** also proves this finding scientifically at .01 level of statistical significance that elderly females engaged in regular physical activity were better as

compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle on self acceptance dimension of mental health.

Conclusion

Self understanding, awareness of own strength and weakness and realistic approach i.e. self acceptance in elderly females engaged in regular physical activity was found to be significantly higher as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle.

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