A study of ego strength among elderly females: With reference to regular physical activity

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Abstract
This study compared ego strength of elderly females in relation to their physical activity status. This study was conducted on 250 physically active elderly women (Ave. age 64.11 yrs) and 250 elderly women with sedentary lifestyle (Ave. age 63.23 yrs.). The study area of this research was limited to Jammu and Kashmir. Regular walking, light exercise and yoga were considered as regular physical activity apart from day-to-day work while sedentary lifestyle has its usual definition. To assess ego strength of selected elderly females, PMHI prepared by Agashe and Helode (1988) was used. It was found that ego strength in elderly females with regular physical activity routine was found to be significantly higher as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle. It was concluded that regular physical activity boost the ability of elderly females to cope with internal and external stressor while maintaining emotional stability.

Keywords: Physical activity, ego strength, elderly females

1. Introduction
One of the major factors of positive mental health is ego strength. Strupp and Hadley (1977) also incorporated ego strength along with self-acceptance and philosophy of life in their model of positive mental health. Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality also describes ego strength. As per the description ego strength is the knack of the ego to deal efficiently with the demands of the id, the superego, and reality. The psychoanalytic theory also incorporated qualities such as emotional stability and effective coping strategies to deal with internal and external stressors.

Ego strength is also an integral element of mental wellbeing which is an essential ability as maintaining own identity and self-awareness in the event of adverse situation, distress and pain. So it can be said that coping mechanism to fight with stressful situation is strongly related to ego strength.

The mental wellbeing of an elderly population is studied with great interest more so in recent time. This is not unexpected because elderly populations in the world and in Indian context are rising. In India it is expected that around 19% of Indian population in the year 2050 will be of elderly people. Keeping the mental, physical, physiological and economic issues in mind, researchers like Sati et al. (2013) [6], Nodehi et al. (2013) [8], Minghelli et al. (2013) [3], Prashantha et al. (2015) [5], Gapler et al., 2006 [2], Tirumalesh and Chandraiah, 2017 conducted studies with elderly people being its central figure. On the basis of scientific evidences it is also envisaged that regular physical activity other than day-to-day work may be a solution to boost mental health of elderly people. It is surprising that ego strength a major component of positive mental health has not been assessed in the light of physical activity in elderly population. To fill this knowledge gap the present study was mediated.

1.1 Objectives
The objective of the present study was to compare ego strength of elderly female engaged in regular physical activity and living a sedentary life.

1.2 Hypothesis
It was hypothesized elderly females engaged in regular physical activity will show more
magnitude of ego strength as compared to elderly females with sedentary lifestyle.

2. Methodology
The following methodological steps were taken in order to conduct the present study.

2.1 Sample
To conduct the study 500 elderly females were selected. The age range of selected elderly females was between 60 to 70 years of age. Equal number of elderly female was selected on the basis of their physical activity status i.e. elderly females following regular physical activity schedule and sedentary elderly females. 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.

2.2 Tools
Positive Mental Health Inventory
To assess ego strength of elderly females, Positive mental health inventory prepared by Agashe and Helode (1988) [1] was used. This inventory is made up of 36 statements which assess self-acceptance, ego strength and philosophy of life dimensions of positive mental health. This inventory is highly reliable and valid. Only ego strength dimension is taken into consideration in the present study.

2.3 Procedure
250 elderly females engaged in regular walking, cycling, light exercise for minimum of 35 min. duration and 250 sedentary elderly females were identified and after obtaining consent to participate in this study, they were subjected to positive mental health inventory prepared by Agashe and Helode (1988) [1]. Scores pertaining to ego strength dimension were segregated into respective study groups as per guidelines of the author's manual. Independent sample ‘t’ test was used to compare ego strength of elderly females belonging to two pre-defined study groups. Results are presented in table 1.

3. Result & Discussion

Table 1: Comparison of Ego Strength among Elderly Females on the basis of Regular Physical Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Status of Physical Activity</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular (N=250)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Strength</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A perusal of entries reported in table 1 reveals statistically significant difference in ego strength of elderly females of two pre-defined study groups on the basis of physical activity. It was observed that ego strength of elderly females pursuing physical activity on a regular basis was significantly higher (M=10.05) as compared to sedentary elderly females (M=5.93). The calculated t=21.60 also proves their finding scientifically at .01 level of statistical significance.

Researches also show that physical activity / exercise is not only beneficial for physical but also mental wellbeing. Regular physical activity reduces stress and depression, increase energy level and enhance overall wellbeing. Hence it is not surprisingly that elderly females engaged in regular physical activity have superior ego-strength as compared to sedentary elderly females.

4. Conclusion
On the basis of results, it may be concluded regular physical activity boost the ability of elderly females to cope with internal and external stressor while maintaining emotional stability thus better ego strength as compared to sedentary elderly females.

5. References