

Factors influencing Successful Aging among Older Adults

Rajina Basnet,¹ Neelima Shakya²

¹Reyada Home Health Care Services, Abudhabi, UAE, ²Sunnybrook Health Sciences Center, Toronto, Canada.

ABSTRACT

Background: The rapid growth of older population has enhanced the number of people at lifetime risk of enduring from chronic diseases. Successful aging is a significant phenomenon for achieving a healthy and happy life for all elderly and aging society.

Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out with the objective of assessing the factors influencing successful aging. Structured interview questionnaire using Successful aging scale and Self-esteem scale was used for data collection and obtained data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance. Participants of the research were considered in this study using purposive sampling technique.

Results: The findings revealed that majority of elderly respondents (73.8%) had successful aging. Successful aging was significantly associated with marital status (p-value= 0.040), family type (p-value=0.002), family annual income (p-value=0.009), presence of children as support system (p-value=0.034), negative life events in last 12 months (p-value<0.001), subjective perception of health (p-value=0.001) and ability to remember things without difficulties (p-value<0.001).

Conclusions: Thus, it can be concluded that successful aging is associated with several factors. So, individual factors must be taken into consideration while implementing intervention programs in order to bring about positive aging experience among elderly.

Keywords: Older adults; self-esteem; successful aging.

INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a process of growing older with time which results in decreased competency to withstand stress.¹

World Health Organization has stated that active ageing is necessary to make ageing a positive experience. The number of people aged 60 and older has doubled since 1980 while the number of people aged 80 years and older will quadruple to 395 million by 2050.² Nepal will have 10.8 percent older population by 2030.³ As a result of advancement of technology, degenerative changes, change in roles and responsibilities, the older population is becoming more vulnerable to suffer from various physical, mental and social problems.^{4, 5}

Studies conducted in Korea to explore the factors influencing successful ageing showed that self-esteem,

strengthening spouse's support and enhancing subjective health status were required to promote successful aging.^{6, 7}

Understanding these factors can contribute to families, society and the country to upgrade the living standard of elderly.

METHODS

Descriptive cross sectional design was adopted to conduct the study among older adults aged 65 years and above living in Municipality- 5, Charikot. Total 80 participants were included using Non probability purposive sampling technique. Structured interview questionnaire was used for data collection. Questionnaire consists of four parts in which part I consists of socio- demographic information,

Correspondence: Rajina Basnet, Reyada Home Health Care Services, Abudhabi, UAE. Email: rajinabasnet123@gmail.com.

part II consists of health and economic factors. Part III consists of Rosenberg Self-esteem scale with 10 statements in 4 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree and part IV consists of Successful aging Scale with 14 statements in 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Successful aging was considered if the score was greater than or equal to mean. Similarly, self-esteem was categorized as high if the respondents scored 25 percent of total score, average if the score is 15-25 percent and low if the score is below 15 percent of total score.

RESULTS

Among 80 respondents, majority of the respondents (66.3%) were below 75 years old with mean age 75.16±9.2 years and more than half (53.8%) were female. Majority of the respondents (70.0%) were married. Most of the respondents (95.0%) were Hindu and more than half of the respondents (52.5%) were literate. Half of the respondents (50.0%) lived with their spouses.

Likewise, more than half of the respondents (58.8%) had more than four children and almost all of them (97.5%) lived in their own houses. Agriculture was the main source of income among one third respondents and more than half of the respondents (57.5%) expressed that their annual income were surplus while (62.5%) received elderly allowance. Majority of the respondents (76.3%) did not experience any negative life events in last 12 months. Among those who faced such events, equal number of respondents (42.1%) faced the death of close ones and severe financial loss. Regarding the support system, most of the respondents (88.80%) had children as their support system.

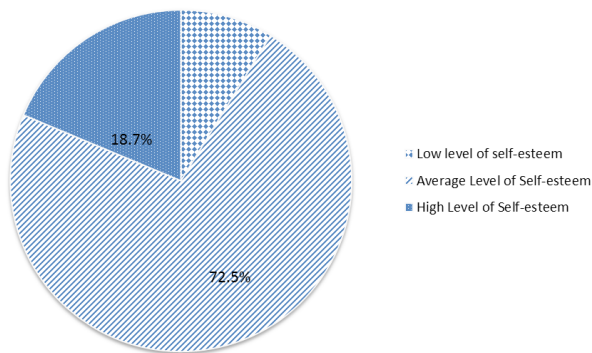


Figure 1. Level of Self Esteem among the Respondents.

Nearly three fourth of respondents had average level of

self-esteem while approximately 19 % participants had high level of self-esteem. Low level of self-esteem was observed only in less than 10%. (Figure 1)

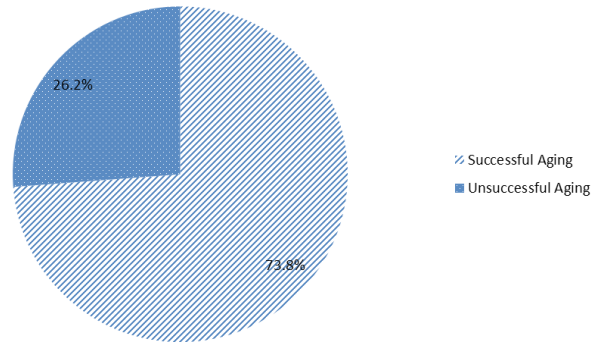


Figure 2. Level of successful aging among the respondents.

Most of the respondents (73.4%) had successful aging, where only a quarter of the population had unsuccessful aging. (Figure 2)

There is a significant association of successful aging with marital status (p-value= 0.040) and negative life events in last 12 months (p-value<0.001), type of family (p-value=0.002). (Table 1)

Table 1. Association between Successful aging and Selected Variables. n=80

Variables	Unsuccessful Aging	Successful Aging	x2 Value	p-value
Sex				
Male	7(18.8)	30(81.2)	1.911	0.167
Female	14(32.6)	29(67.4)		
Marital status				
Married	11(19.6)	45(80.4)	4.209	0.040*
Single/unmarried	10(41.6)	14(58.4)		
Family type				
Living alone	6(54.5)	5(45.5)	17.041	0.002*
Living with family	15(21.7)	54(78.3)		
Education Status				
Literate	9(21.4)	33(78.6)	1.062	0.303
Illiterate	12(31.5)	26(68.5)		
House currently living				
Self	20(25.6)	58(74.4)		0.459f
Rented	1(50.0)	1(50.0)		
Negative life events in last 12 months				
Yes	11(57.8)	8(42.2)	12.889	<0.001*
No	10(16.4)	51(83.6)		

Note: f=Fisher's exact test, *P-value<0.05 = statistically

significant

There is a significant association of Successful aging with family annual income (p-value=0.009) and children as support system (p-value=0.034), while other variables had no significant association on successful aging.(Table 2)

Table 2. Association between Successful Aging and Selected Variables. n=80

Variables	Unsuccessful Aging	Successful Aging	x2 value	p-value
Family annual income				
Sufficient for 12 months	14(41.2)	20(58.8)	6.805	0.009*
Sufficient for 12 months and surplus	7(15.2)	39(84.8)		
Elderly allowance				
Yes	13(26.0)	37(74.0)	0.004	0.948
No	8(26.7)	22(73.3)		
Support System				
Relatives				
No	19(24.4)	59(75.6)		0.066 f
Yes	2(100.0)	0(0.0)		
Children				
No	5(55.6)	4(44.4)	4.499	0.034*
Yes	16(22.5)	55(77.5)		
Society				
No	17(23.3)	56(76.7)		0.073f
Yes	4(57.1)	3(42.9)		

Note: f =Fisher's exact test, * P-value<0.05 = statistically significant

There is a significant association of Successful aging with subjective perception of health (p-value=0.001) and ability to remember things without difficulties (p-value <0.001), while there was no association of self-esteem and difficulty to carry out ADL with successful aging. (Table 3)

Table 3. Association between Successful Aging and Selected Variables. n=80

Variables	Unsuccessful Aging	Successful Aging	x2 value	p-value
Perceived health Status				
Satisfactory	12(70.6)	5(29.4)	10.862	0.001*
Unsatisfactory	9(60.0)	6(40.0)		
Ability to remember things without difficulties				

Table 3. Association between Successful Aging and Selected Variables. n=80

Variables	Unsuccessful Aging	Successful Aging	x2 value	p-value
No	8(14.5)	47(85.5)	12.455	<0.001*
Yes	13(52.0)	12(48.0)		
Difficulty to carry out ADL				
Yes	9(28.1)	23(71.9)	4.132	0.248
No	10(20.8)	38(71.2)		
Self-esteem				
Low	3(42.9)	4(57.1)		0.371 f
Average to high	18(24.7)	55(75.3)		

Note:f= Fisher's exact test, *P-value<0.05 = statistically significant

DISCUSSION

In this study, 73.8% had successfully aging. This finding is contradictory to the findings of previous studies carried out by Han S and Yun S which revealed that only 19.6% and 3.8% of the participants had successful aging respectively.⁷ This may be due to variation in population size, setting, research design, family structure and perception of individual in our setting.

A significant association was found between marital status and successful aging (p=0.040). Findings of the study is supported by the research conducted by Manasatchakunet al.⁸ where marital status is associated with successful aging (p=0.020). This may be because support and care from spouse encourage people and have positive effects on individual's health.

Similarly, a significant association was found between family annual income and successful aging (p=0.009). It is understandable that the higher the family income, the easier it is to meet the needs of the elder's family members. Findings of the study are congruent with the research conducted by Chaves.⁹

There was a significant association between subjective perception of health and successful aging (p=0.001). Findings of the study is consistent with those of Meng and D'Arcy¹⁰ which explains that successful aging is significantly and positively associated with subjective health status (p= 0.001). It could be explained that good perceived health status is paramount for each individual because it enables them to carry out ADL without the need to be dependent on others thereby improving self-esteem as well.

A significant association of successful aging was found

with family type (p value=0.002) and support system ($p=0.034$). One possible explanation is that Nepalese culture and tradition noticed that approximately 88.8% of participants had children as their support system. Having a support system upgrades self-confidence, life satisfaction and longevity.

A significant association of successful aging was found with negative life events in last 12 months and successful aging ($p<0.001$) and with ability to remember things without difficulty ($p<0.001$).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it is concluded that majority of the respondents had successful aging. Marital status, family type, children as support system, negative life events in last 12 months, self-perception of health, family annual income and ability to remember things without difficulties were significantly associated with successful aging. Therefore, it can be inferred that individual factors must be considered and necessary support should be provided to elderly so that they can obtain optimal successful aging.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Bhibav Adhikari for his guidance in data processing and statistical analysis. We owe our deepest gratitude to Bhimeshwor, Municipality, Nepal and district health coordinator Mr. Shyam Bahadur Khadka for the approval and cooperation during the time of data collection. Most importantly, we would like to express our immense gratefulness to all of the respondents without whom this study would not have been completed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Dhungana S, Acharya K, Raj B. Quality of life in Elderly People-A. Comparative Study in Different Elderly Home of Kathmandu; 2005.
2. World Health Organization. World Health Statistics 2014. [Internet]. May 17, 2014; Available from: http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat/EN_WHS_2014
3. The Jakarta Post. How Asia's Population is aging, 2015-2030 Scenario. [Internet]. 2015; Available from: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/02/14/how-asias-population-is-aging-2015-2030-scenario.html>
4. Nepal Health Professional Council, Census of Nepal 2011. [Internet] Available from :<http://mhpc.gov.np>.
5. Geriatric Center Nepal. Status Report in Elderly People (60+) on the Health: Nutrition and Social Status Focusing on Research Needs. 2010.
6. Hyun Cha N, JuSeo E, Sok S. Factors influencing the successful aging of older Korean adults. Contemporary Nurse [Internet]. 2012;41(1):78-87. [Article]
7. Han S, Yun S. Successful Aging and the Influencing Factors in the Korean Elderly: Focused on Family Support. J. Korean Acad. Community Health Nurse. [Internet]. December 17, 2015;26(4):372. [Article]
8. Manasatchakun P, Chotiga P, Hochwalder J, Roxberg A, Sandborgh M, Asp M. Factors associated with healthy aging among older persons in Northeastern Thailand. Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology. 2016 Dec;31(4):369-84. [Article]
9. Chaves ML, Camozzato AL, Eizirik CL, Kaye J. Predictors of Normal and Successful Aging Among Urban-Dwelling Elderly Brazilians. The J Gerontol [Internet]. 2009;64B(5):597-602. [Article]
10. Meng X, D'Arcy C. Successful Aging in Canada: Prevalence and Predictors from a Population-Based Sample of Older Adults. Gerontology [Internet]. 2014;60(1):65-72. [Article]