

## A Comparative Study to Assess the QOL (Quality of Life) Among Elderly Living in Old Age Homes and Living with their Families in Selected Areas of Uttarakhand

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### Abstract

*Background of the study:* Aging is a natural process and an inevitable one. Old age is a crucial phase where the physiological, psychological and socio-cultural changes in elderly affect their living pattern and their health status too in terms of their quality of life. *Objective of the study:* To assess the quality of life among elderly living in old age homes and living with their families in selected areas of Uttarakhand. *Materials and Methods:* A quantitative research approach with descriptive comparative design was used to assess the QOL (quality of life) among elderly living in old age homes and living with their families. The Population consisted of elderly residing in selected old age homes and community area. The study was conducted at selected old age homes and community area of Uttarakhand. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 164 subjects from the population, i.e. 82 subjects from respective old age homes and 82 subjects from selected community area. Socio-demographic Proforma, WHO QOL-BREF scale was used to assess the QOL among elderly with the help of structured interview method. *Results:* It was found that Mean score for QOL with S.D for elderly living in old age homes and living with families was  $68.47 \pm 10.752$  and  $97.44 \pm 8.564$  with "t"-value of 19.08 at 0.01 level of significance. Demographic variables, i.e. gender, marital status, educational status, retirement, physical illness were found to be significantly associated with QOL of elderly living in old age homes and those living with their families. *Conclusion:* Hence the overall findings suggest that quality of life was good among elderly who were living with their families as compare to those who were living in old age homes.

**Keywords:** Quality of life; Elderly; Old age homes; Families.

### How to cite this article:

Priyanka Thakur, Grace M Singh, J Manoranjini. A Comparative Study to Assess the QOL (Quality of Life) Among Elderly Living in Old Age Homes and Living with their Families in Selected Areas of Uttarakhand. J Psychiatr Nurs. 2019;8(2):59-66.

### Introduction

Aging is that reality of human existence on this earth from which no individual can escape and furthermore, it plays very important role in this demographic transition. The normal aging process starts with biological aspects of aging and also includes great impact on individuals overall

psychological and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> There has been steep incline in number of elderly in India. India is a nest for 77 million and second largest number of aged people in the world next to China. This terrific increase in the population of elderly directs our concern toward maintenance of QOL among elderly population. Increasing age is accompanied by various numerous health problems and functional deficits. Therefore, the promotion of QOL at the later stages of life is extremely important. Aging, along with the functional decline in terms of physical and psychological disability, economic dependence, and social cut off, freedom of young generation, compromises QOL.<sup>2</sup> At worldwide level, general welfare in terms of health, i.e. QOL among elderly is a significant and key area of interest reflecting the physical fitness and good welfare of this jeopardized populace. According to WHO Quality of life is defined as an individual's perception of their position in life in context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to

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Received on 11.10.2018

Accepted on 19.06.2019

their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.<sup>3</sup> It is a wide concept that includes all facets of life and covers four areas: physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.<sup>4</sup>

Elderly evokes a picture of indifference, lack of concern, helplessness, seeking support from others, grief and depression. Further, in the modern society people are drifting towards nuclear family and elderly people are having to stay in old age homes where they repeatedly encounter difficulties because of extremely institutionalized, depersonalized authoritative environment and surroundings. They face problems of adapting and adjustments with rigorous and extremely stern schedule in old age homes, total disengagement from family, apprehension and concern over allocating oneself to a new climate, decreased physiological capabilities and close recurrent confrontation with demise and illnesses.<sup>5</sup> Hamashima scrutinized former investigations of subjective welfare especially general welfare in terms of health i.e. quality of life in Japan and concluded that the quality of life was affected by physical fitness and different factors like age, marital status, occupation and economic status.<sup>6</sup> A study was conducted regarding psychosocial impact among primary elderly survivors of Uttarakhand flood disaster in India and the findings revealed psychosocial impact through loss of property and livelihood, along with disturbed quality of life and psychological impact like sleep disturbances, recurrent flashbacks and concern about future. From that study it was evident that QOL is important aspect in evaluating and assessing the wellbeing of elderly but there is shortage of studies directed towards assessing the quality of life among elderly in India, more so in old age homes hence current investigation is intended to highlight the QOL among elderly population as

there is limited understanding of factors influencing their QOL.<sup>7</sup> Further in this context by lightening the above facts the current investigation is an effort by researcher for determining the quality of life among old age populace residing in elderly homes and family set up in selected areas of Uttarakhand.

Objectives of the studies are to assess QOL among elderly living in old age homes and living with their families, to compare QOL among elderly living in old age homes and living with their families, to find association between QOL and selected demographic variables of elderly living in old age homes and living with families.

### Materials and Methods

In this study a quantitative research approach with descriptive comparative design was used to assess the quality of life of elderly living in old age homes and living with families. The Study was conducted at old age homes, i.e., Geeta Kutir Ashram (Haridwar), Prem Dham (Dehradun) and Bullwala community area of Uttarakhand. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 164 subjects from the population (82 subjects each from old age homes and community area). Socio-demographic Proforma, WHOQOL-BREF scale and structured interview method was used to assess QOL among elderly. Formal ethical permission was obtained from ethical committee for conducting the study. The study participants were interviewed after explaining academic nature of the research, and were assured that information collected from them would be kept confidential.

### Results

**Table 1:** Frequency and Percentage distribution of elderly with their selected socio-demographic characteristics living in the old age homes and those living with their families.

N = 164

Sl. no.	Demographic variables	Elderly (in old age homes) N = 82		Elderly (in families) N = 82	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	<b>Age</b>				
	(a) 60-80 years	75	91.5	77	93.9
	(b) 81-100 years	7	8.5	5	6.1
2.	<b>Gender</b>				
	(a) Male	45	54.9	49	59.8
	(b) Female	37	45.1	33	40.2
3.	<b>Religion</b>				
	(a) Hindu	73	89.0	64	78
	(b) Christian	9	11.0	0	0
	(c) Sikh	0	0	18	22

Sl. No.	Demographic variables	Elderly (in old age homes) N = 82		Elderly (in families) N = 82	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
4.	<b>Marital status</b>				
	(a) Married	8	9.8	61	74.4
	(b) Unmarried	11	13.4	1	1.2
	(c) Widow	27	32.9	13	15.9
	(d) Widower	32	39.0	6	7.3
	(e) Separated	4	4.9	0	0
	(f) Divorcee	0	0	1	1.2
5.	<b>Educational qualification</b>				
	(a) Primary	32	39.0	50	61
	(b) High school	26	31.7	16	19.5
	(c) Intermediate	13	15.9	12	14.6
	(d) Graduation and above	11	13.4	4	4.9
6.	<b>Retirement</b>				
	(a) Yes	19	23.2	19	23.2
	(b) No	63	76.8	63	76.8
7.	<b>Source of income</b>				
	(a) Pension	32	39.0	62	75.6
	(b) Other	50	61.0	20	24.4
8.	<b>Physical Illness</b>				
	(a) Yes	57	69.5	28	34.1
	(b) No	25	30.5	54	65.0
9.	<b>Duration of living in old age homes/ families</b>				
	(a) 1-20 years	80	97.6	68	82.9
	(b) 21-40 years	2	2.4	11	13.4
	(c) 41-60 years	0	0	3	3.7
10.	<b>Type of family in they lived/living</b>				
	(a) Joint	79	96.3	78	95.1
	(b) Nuclear	03	3.7	4	4.9
11.	<b>No. of children with they lived/living</b>				
	(a) One	26	31.7	14	17.1
	(b) More than 1	43	52.4	67	81.7
	(c) No children	13	15.9	1	1.2

**Table 2:** Overall Mean, domain wise mean and mean% age of QOL among elderly living in old age homes and living with their families. N = 164

Variables	Quality of life among elderly living in old age homes		Quality of life among elderly living with their families in community area	
Overall mean	68.48 ± 10.752		97.44 ± 8.564	
Quality of life domains	Domain wise mean ± S.D	Mean percentage	Domain wise mean ± S.D	Mean percentage
Domain 1 (Physical)	16.93 ± 4.44	48.39	26.46 ± 3.96	75.60
Domain 2 (Psychological)	15.31 ± 2.85	51.05	21.21 ± 2.75	70.73
Domain 3 (Social relations)	5.90 ± 1.95	39.34	11.25 ± 0.86	75.03
Domain 4 (Environment)	24.71 ± 2.84	61.79	30.79 ± 2.18	76.98
	Total domain mean = 62.85		Total domain mean=89.71	

From Table 2 it can be inferred that overall mean of QOL of elderly living in old age homes was  $68.48 \pm 10.752$ . Domain wise mean in this table suggests that mean QOL score in domain 4 (environmental) was higher ( $24.71 \pm 2.84$ ) than other domains; whereas mean score in domain 3 ( $5.90 \pm 1.95$ ) shows that social relationships were weak among subjects as compared to other domains.

Furthermore, overall mean for QOL of elderly living with their families was  $97.44 \pm 8.564$ . Domain wise mean in this table suggests that mean QOL score in domain 4 (environmental) was higher ( $30.79 \pm 2.18$ ) than other domains; whereas mean score in domain 3 that is (social relationship) ( $11.25 \pm .86$ ) shows that social relationships were weak among subjects as compared to other domains.

Above findings indicate that quality of life among elderly who were living with their families

was good as compared to elderly who were living in old age homes.

Independent 't' test was applied to compare the QOL among elderly living in old age homes and living with their families. Mean and S.D of QOL score of elderly living in old age homes was ( $68.47 \pm 10.752$ ) and for elderly living with their families mean and S.D of QOL score was ( $97.44 \pm 8.564$ ) with t-value of 19.08 at 0.01 level of significance which indicated that the mean difference between the two groups was statistically significant and not by chance (Table 3).

Data in Table 4 reveals that demographic variables, i.e., gender, marital status and physical illness were found to be statistically significantly associated with QOL among elderly living in old age homes. Findings also suggested that males were having better quality of life as compare to females

**Table 3:** Significance of mean difference between QOL scores of elderly living with their families and living in old age homes.

Mean $\pm$ S.D		't'-value	p-value
Elderly living in old age homes	Elderly living with their families		
68.47 $\pm$ 10.752	97.43 $\pm$ 8.564	19.08	0.01

**Table 4:** Association between QOL (quality of life) with their selected demographic variables among elderly living in the old age homes. w N = 82

Variables	Poor	Average	Good	V. Good	df	$\chi^2$ /Fischer's exact	p-value
<b>Age</b>							
(a) 60-80 years	24(32.0)	44(58.7)	7(9.31)	0(0.0)	3	7.451 \$	0.057
(b) 81-100 years	3(42.9)	2(28.6)	1(14.3)	1(14.3)			
<b>Gender</b>							
(a) Male	9(20.0)	28(62.2)	7(15.6)	1(2.2)	3	9.702 \$	*0.011
(b) Female	18(48.6)	18(48.6)	1(2.7)	0(0.0)			
<b>Religion</b>							
(a) Hindu	21(28.8)	43(58.9)	8(11.0)	1(1.4)	3	5.022 \$	0.200
(b) Christian	6(66.7)	3(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)			
<b>Marital status</b>							
(a) Married	0(0.0)	3(37.5)		0(0.0)			
(b) Unmarried	2(18.2)	9(81.8)	5(62.5)	0(0.0)	12	27.096 \$	*0.001
(c) Widow	15(55.6)	11(40.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)			
(d) Widower	9(28.1)	20(62.5)	1(3.7)	1(3.1)			
(c) Separated	1(25.0)	3(75.0)	2(6.2)	0(0.0)			
<b>Educational qualification</b>							
(a) Primary	13(40.6)	18(56.2)	1(3.1)	0(0.0)			
(b) High school	7(26.9)	17(65.4)	1(3.8)	1(3.8)			
(c) Intermediate	3(23.1)	7(53.8)	3(23.1)	0(0.0)	9	12.328 \$	0.130
(d) Graduation and above	4(36.4)	4(36.4)	3(27.3)	0(0.0)			

Variables	Poor	Average	Good	V. Good	df	χ <sup>2</sup> / Fischer's exact	p-value
<b>Retirement</b>							
(a) Yes	5(26.3)	10(52.6)	3(15.8)	1(5.3)	3	4.212 \$	0.229
(b) No	22(34.9)	36(57.1)	5(7.9)	0(0.0)			
<b>Source of income</b>							
(a) Pension	7(21.9)	20(62.5)	4(12.5)	1(3.1)	3	4.272 \$	0.191
(b) Other	20(40.0)	26(52.0)	4(8.0)	0(0.0)			
<b>Physical illness</b>							
(a) Yes	26(45.6)	30(52.6)	1(1.8)	0(0.0)	3	24.498 \$	*0.001
(b) No	1(4.0)	16(64.0)	7(28.0)	1(4.0)			
<b>Type of family</b>							
(a) Joint	26(32.9)	45(57.0)	7(8.9)	1(1.3)	3	4.100 \$	0.331
(b) Nuclear	1(33.3)	1(33.3)	1(33.3)	0(0.0)			
<b>Duration of living in old age home</b>							
(a) 1-20 years	27(33.8)	45(56.2)	7(8.8)	1(1.2)	3	5.304 \$	0.314
(b) 21-40 years	0(0.0)	1(50.0)	1(50.0)	0(0.0)			
<b>No. of children with they lived</b>							
(a) One child	10(38.5)	16(61.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	6	7.244 \$	0.256
(b) More than 1 child	14(32.6)	21(48.8)	7(16.3)	1(2.3)			
(c) No child	3(23.1)	9(69.2)	1(7.7)	0(0.0)			

p < 0.05 level of significance, \$ = Fischer's exact test, # = Yates correction test

in old age homes. Elderly who were unmarried, who were living with their spouses and who were widower were having better quality of life in comparison to those who were widows in old age homes. Elderly who were not suffering from any kind of physical illness were having better quality of life in contrast to those who were suffering from physical illnesses like diabetes, arthritis, back pain, HTN, etc.

Data in Table 5 reveals that demographic variables, i.e., gender, marital status, educational status, retirement, and physical illness were found to be statistically significantly associated with QOL among elderly living with their families. Results here suggested that both males and females were equally having better quality of life. Elderly those were educated up to high school, intermediate and graduation and above they were having better QOL as compare to those who were educated up to

**Table 5:** Association between QOL (quality of life) with their selected demographic variables among elderly living with their families. N = 82

Variables	Average	Good	Very good	df	χ <sup>2</sup> / Fischer's Exact	p-value
<b>Age</b>						
(a) 60-80 years	4(5.2)	36(46.8)	37(48.1)	2	1.861 \$	0.504
(b) 81-100 years	0(0.0)	4(80.0)	1(20.0)			
<b>Gender</b>						
(a) Male	1(2.0)	17(34.7)	31(63.3)	2	14.48 #	
(b) Female	3(9.1)	23(69.7)	7(21.2)			*0.001
<b>Religion</b>						
(a) Hindu	4(6.2)	29(45.3)	31(48.4)	2	1.544 #	0.480
(b) Sikh	0(0.0)	11(61.1)	7(38.9)			
<b>Marital status</b>						
(a) Married	2(3.3)	25(41.0)	34(55.7)			
(b) Unmarried	0(0.0)	1(100.0)	0(0.0)	8	17.371 \$	*0.012
(c) Widow	1(7.7)	10(76.9)	2(15.4)			
(c) Widower	0(0.0)	4(66.7)	2(33.3)			
(d) Divorcee	1(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)			

Variables	Average	Good	Very good	df	χ <sup>2</sup> / Fischer's Exact	p-value
<b>Educational qualification</b>						
(a) Primary	2(4.0)	30(60.0)	18(36.0)	6	14.781 \$	*0.009
(b) High school	0(0.0)	6(37.5)	10(62.5)			
(c) Intermediate	0(0.0)	4(33.3)	8(66.7)			
(d) Graduation and above	2(50.0)	0(0.0)	2(50.0)			
<b>Retirement</b>						
(a) Yes	1(5.3)	4(21.1)	14(73.7)	2	7.895 #	*0.016
(b) No	3(4.8)	36(57.1)	24(38.1)			
<b>Source of income</b>						
(a) Pension	3(4.8)	33(53.2)	26(41.9)	2	2.095 #	0.353
(b) Other	1(5.0)	7(35.0)	12(60.0)			
<b>Physical illness</b>						
(a) Yes	3(10.7)	22(78.6)	3(10.7)	2	22.350 #	*0.001
(b) No	1(1.9)	18(33.3)	35(64.8)			
<b>Duration of living with family</b>						
(a) 1-20 years	4(5.9)	31(45.6)	33(48.5)	4	3.525 \$	0.489
(b) 21-40 years	0(0.0)	6(54.5)	5(45.5)			
(c) 41-60 years	0(0.0)	3(100.0)	0(0.0)			
<b>No. of children with they living</b>						
(a) One child	1(7.1)	6(42.9)	7(50.0)	4	3.033 \$	0.763
(b) More than 1 child	3(4.5)	33(49.3)	31(46.3)			
(c) No child	0(0.0)	1(100.0)	0(0.0)			

p < 0.05 level of significance, \$ = Fischer's exact test, # = Yates correction test

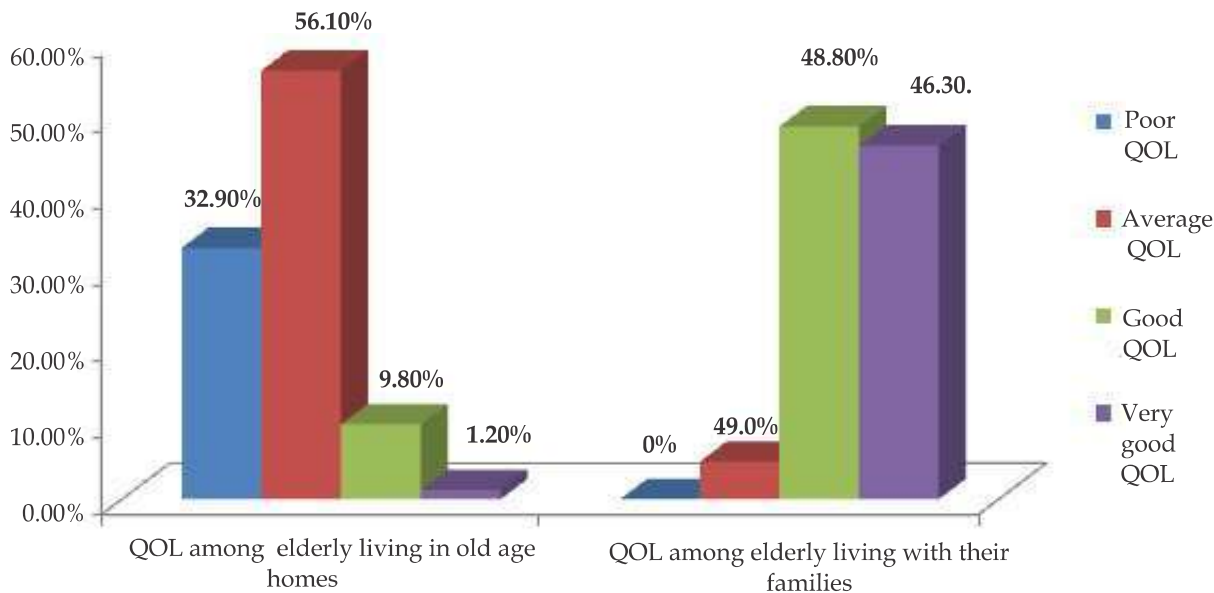


Fig 1: Graph showing Percentage distribution of elderly living in old age homes and living with their families by their QOL.

only primary level which means that as educational qualification increases quality of life also increases. Elderly who were retired were having better QOL as compare to those who were not retired. Elderly who were married and living with their spouses, unmarried were having better QOL as compare to others whereas elderly who were not suffering from any physical illness were having better QOL as compare to those who were suffering from physical illness.

## Discussion

Findings of the investigation revealed that on the basis of overall mean  $\pm$  S.D and domain wise mean the quality of life among elderly living with their families was found to be good as compared to elderly living in old age homes.

Similar findings were supported by Dr. Chandrika, Dr. Radhakumari, Dr. Madhavi (2015) who carried out an investigation on the quality of life of elder people residing in elderly homes and community in Vishakhapatnam city. The researchers concluded that the mean scores of quality of life in all four domains that is physical, psychological, social relations and environment were found to be better among elderly living in community than in old age homes.<sup>2</sup>

On comparison of mean of quality of life among elder people living in old age homes and living with their families it was found that there was highly significant difference between the two groups.

Similar findings were supported by Jamwal (2016) who conducted an investigation on psychosocial consequences among elderly living in institutional and non-institutional settings. The results of study concluded that quality of life of elderly was significant different in institutionalized elderly and elderly living with their families on physical, psychological, social relationship domains.<sup>4</sup>

In this study the gender, marital status and physical illness were found to significantly associated with QOL (quality of life) among elderly living in old age homes.

Results also showed that gender, marital status educational status, physical illness and elderly who were not retired were lesser and the factors were found to be significantly associated with quality of life.

Afghamolaei *et al.* in their investigation of health related QOL of elderly people showed that QOL was not only declined by process of aging, but

other considerations such as sex, education and chronic disease could decrease health related QOL of old people.<sup>8</sup>

Similar findings were reported by Mandadi, Rayirala *et al.* which showed that high quality of life was seen in elderly who were highly educated and were not having any unhealthy habits.<sup>9</sup>

Similar findings were reported by Dr. Chandrika, Dr. Radhakumari, Dr. Devimadhavi (2015) in their study which showed that gender was found to be statistically significant and scores of physical and psychological domain were less in females as compared to males. The state of being married, i.e. marital status was also found to be statistically significant (at  $p \leq 0.05$ ) while mean QOL scores of social domain was less in widowed as compared to married.<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

The present study revealed that quality of life was better among elderly who were living with their families as compared to those elderly who were living in old age homes. Further, there is a scope to have a better understanding about factors behind poor psychological well-being and quality of life in various domains through qualitative research.

## Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the families and old age people in old age homes who participated in this study. I am grateful to my guide, co-guide for their extensive collaboration, without whom this study would not have been concluded.

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