

# The Relationship between Psychological Wellbeing and Self-Care among Elderly Residents in Iraq

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## Abstract

Aging is described as progressive change in psychological, biological and social structure of persons. The advanced age contributed negatively to self-care. The relocation to care homes considered as stressful event for the elderly people. The purpose of this study to find the relationship between psychological well-being and self-care among the elderly residents at nursing homes in middle Euphrates in Iraq. A descriptive-correlational design was used to gather the information from the sample of 60 participants in nursing homes. The study has been carried out from November, 1st, 2019 to August, 2020. Purposive sample used to collect the data according to some criteria. The data collected by means of Ryff scales of psychological well-being (shorten version) and self-care questionnaire as well as the socio-demographical of study sample. The data collected by using structured interview technique with the elderly residents in nursing homes. The data collected by means of Ryff scales of psychological well-being (shorten version) and self-care questionnaire as well as the socio-demographical of study sample. The data collected by using structured interview technique with the elderly residents in nursing homes. The results of study indicate that a relationship exists between psychological well-being and self-care among the elderly residents in nursing homes. As the relationship between the two variables is a high significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.721$ ). The recommendations focus on managing the problems existing among the elderly and monitoring their psychological state. Establishing educational programs on how to focus on the psychological and physical aspects. In addition, increasing leisure trips to various places.

**Keywords:** Psychological wellbeing, self-care, elderly, nursing homes.

## Introduction

The various sociocultural, biological, and genetic factors as well as personal experience determine ageing process and quality of life of elderly. Besides, it encourages the elderly to experience positive emotions and attitudes, enhancing mechanisms of self-control and self-regulation and optimizing the ability to adapt and coping with problems at this vital stage<sup>(1)</sup>.

Mental health affects each part of life, from job success to relations with others, friends and family members. These can affect the ability of an individual to sleep and less tangible things, such as the likelihood that an individual takes risks, push the self intellectually, and feel emotions such as fulfillment, gratitude and happiness. Thus, caring for mental health is such a crucial part of living a healthy, happy and well-rounded life<sup>(2)</sup>. According to some authors, later-life research requires to focus more than just understanding the elderly as being sick and old. The mental health of older people is affected by life experiences that can be positive as well as negative<sup>(3)</sup>.

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The self-care affects directly on wellbeing<sup>(4)</sup>, and self-care is a matter for people to support their own health and well-being on their own account<sup>(5)</sup>. A study<sup>(6)</sup> indicated self-care as behaviors that promote physical and emotional wellbeing. Research on wellness has too recorded the beneficial effects of self-care activities on physical and psychological health<sup>(7)</sup>. Abilities of Self-management to maintain and achieve well-being based on who the elderly have sufficient level of cognitive, physical and social activity to meet their goals and needs for well-being. Since these, lower functioning level is predicted to contribute to weaker skills of self-management. For example, lower level of emotional, physical and cognitive functioning may adversely affect the ability to self-manage ‘to have a constructive frame of mind,’ that corresponds to the capacity to adopt and sustain a positive frame of mind or positive expectation. It is believed that the willingness to maintain a positive frame of mind can lead to wellbeing, as it increases the time span and improves motivation, that in effect allows persons to participate in activities and not easily quit<sup>(8)</sup>. The level of self-care engagement may lead to increased well-being. A study<sup>(4)</sup> observed an important, positive association between the level or value of self-care and well-being. Other research shows that improved self-care practice increases well-being. Based on what was mentioned above, we aim to find out whether there is a relationship between psychological wellbeing and self-care among elderly residents at nursing home in Middle Euphrates in Iraq.

## Methods

A quantitative descriptive correlation design has been utilized in this study as a way to examine the relationships among the main study variables including the predictor variables, which include the psychological wellbeing variables<sup>(9)</sup>, and the dependent variable, which was self-care<sup>(3)</sup>. The study has been carried out from November, 1st, 2019 to August, 2020. The study covers the elderly residents at nursing home in middle Euphrates (Karbala, Najaf, Hilla, Diwaniya)<sup>(10)</sup>. A non - probability purposive sample consist of (60) elderly persons that are selected from the total population of (100) elderly residents at nursing homes. In addition to that, a pilot study has chosen from the total number. The study sample consists of 37 men and 23 women ranging in age from 65 (National Health and Aging Trends Study) to 87 years. The purposive Sample is used in order to obtain the representative sample according to some criteria. The assessment tool has been reconstructed in a form of a questionnaire that has been adopted and modified by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of 3 parts, which are socio-demographic and clinical characteristics, RYFF psychological wellbeing scale (18 items version), and self-care scale (29 items). The instrument face validity was determining through a panel of experts. The reliability can be determined by using Pearson’s Correlation Formula (r). The result of the reliability coefficient for domains of psychological wellbeing is 0.71 and Self-care is 0.93, which is considered statistically acceptable matching with the lower bound of reliability coefficient.

## Results

**Table (1): Distribution of the sample according to their total score of psychological wellbeing**

		Low	Moderate	High
Elderly’s groups	Frequency	0	49	11
	Percentage	0.00	81.67	18.33

**Table (2) : Distribution of the sample according to their total score of self-care**

Elderly's groups		Low	Moderate	High
	Frequency	4	41	15
	Percentage	6.67	68.33	25.00

Tables (1) and (2), show Distribution of the sample according to their total score of psychological wellbeing and self-care, they show the highest percentage for psychological wellbeing is moderate (81.67%), it also shows the highest percentage for psychological wellbeing is moderate (68.33%) .

**Table (3) : Overall Assessment of level of Psychological well-being Dimensions for the study sample**

Dimensions of Psychological well-being	Items	MS.	Assess.
Autonomy dimension	Q14	2.4	3.43 moderate
	Q16	3.93	
	Q17	3.97	
Personal growth dimension	Q10	4.05	3.84 high
	Q11	4.4	
	Q13	3.07	
Environmental mastery dimension	Q3	2.87	3.16 moderate
	Q7	3.33	
	Q8	3.3	
Positive relations with others dimension	Q5	3.23	3.24 moderate
	Q12	3.55	
	Q15	2.95	
Self- acceptance dimension	Q1	2.68	2.78 moderate
	Q4	2.88	
Purpose in life dimension	Q2	3.35	3.11 moderate
	Q6	3.05	
	Q9	2.93	
Overall Assessment			3.29 moderate

MS :Mean of Scores

**Table (4): Overall Assessment (mean and ratio of scores)of self-care domains for the sample**

Items	MS	Assessment
Physical Self care	3.24	Moderate
Psychological Self care	3.27	Moderate
Social Self care	2.94	Moderate
Overall Assessment	3.15	Moderate

**MS : Mean of Scores**

Table (4) reveals overall assessment (mean and ratio of scores) of self care domains for the study subjects, they show that the assessment of elderly residents is (moderate) for the social domain ( mean of scores = 2.94 ) , while it is considered (moderate) for the physical and psychological ones (3.24 and 3.27 respectively) .

**Table (5): The relationship between psychological wellbeing and self-care of the sample**

Pearson’s Coefficients	Self-care Assessment
Psychological wellbeing	r = 0.721 **

**\*Significant at P<0.05; \*\* High significant at P<0.01**

Table (5) shows that there is a high significant positive correlation (P<0.01) between psychological wellbeing and self-care of elderly residents (r = 0.721) . The same table reveals that there is a significant positive correlation (P<0.05) between psychological wellbeing and Spiritual health scale residents (r = 0.322) .

**Discussion**

Tables (1,3) indicate that the mean total score of the Ryff scale was 3.29 as well as the highest percentage of the elderly’s group have moderate level of psychological wellbeing. This indicates that the level of psychological well-being of elderly residents at nursing homes was moderate, despite the circumstances associated with the relocation to residential care and the changes inherent in aging that show a shift in the main sources that contribute to their well-being. This result is supported by a study<sup>(11)</sup> indicates that the elderly have high level of psychological well-being in social welfare institutions in Jordan. Another study indicated that the majority of

elderly (59%) have moderate level of psychological wellbeing in India<sup>(12)</sup>. Regarding the personal growth, which mean the process of continuous development of oneself and preparation for new challenges across life span. The results of study indicates that personal growth of elderly was high level (mean of score=3.84). This result may be due to that most of elderly feel better over the time and try to enjoy their life at nursing home, as well as, the attempt to acquire new positive behaviors and attitudes. This result is supported by a study indicates that the majority of the elderly (61%) have high level of personal growth<sup>(12)</sup>.

Tables (2,4) reveal that the overall assessment of self-care domains for the study sample was moderate (mean of scores = 3.15) and the high percentage of the elderly have moderate level of self-care (68.33%). It can be suggested that the process of aging raises the level of dependence on others and, as a result, it may lead to a decline in quality of life as well as the highest percentage of chronic diseases among the elderly group

(88.3%) and those have difficulties in walking (40%). All of these reasons may lead to a mediating level of self-care. This result is supported by a study<sup>(13)</sup> stated that the self-care performance of elderly people was at a moderate level. When analyzing personal variables, the elderly participants had a confirmed mean age of 68.3 years old. It can be described that they are getting older and their self-care behavior performance decreases as age progresses.

Table (5) indicated that there is a high significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.721$ ) between psychological wellbeing and self-care of elderly residents at  $P < 0.01$ , which means when the psychological well-being of elderly people increases that will lead to increase their self-care and vice versa. This result coinciding with a study<sup>(4)</sup> observed that an important, positive association between the level or value of self-care and well-being “( $r = .228, p = .014$ )”. In particular, a significant, positive association between self-care and wellbeing suggests that greater self-care activity is correlated with an improvement in general well-being. This result supported by a study<sup>(14)</sup> indicates that There is a positive and significant relationship between self-care and the psychological well-being of the elderly and direct effect of self-care on the psychological wellbeing of the elderly people (standard coefficient = 0.14). Also, The result of study supported by a study<sup>(8)</sup> found that the self-management abilities significantly affected the well-being ( $r = 0.56; p \leq 0.001$ ). The present finding is reinforced by a study<sup>(15)</sup> found that the relationship between psychological wellbeing and daily life activities was statistically significant and the ‘r’ value was 0.375.

### Conclusions

There is an impact of psychological wellbeing upon the level of self-care. The relationship between psychological wellbeing and the level of self-care is confounded by the variables of age, marital status, and the health status.

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**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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