

Assessment of Cognitive Impairment among Elderly in the Selected Rural Community, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

A study was conducted to assess the cognitive impairment among elderly. The objectives were 1. To assess cognitive impairment among elderly in the selected rural community and 2. To associate cognitive impairment with selected demographic variables. Majority of the clients who scored positive for cognitive impairment were between 60 - 70 year of age, were female, living in nuclear families, were supported by family members financially, watching television was their leisure time activity, remembered family occasions had altered vision and/or hearing and were using denture.

Keywords: Cognitive impairment, elderly.

Introduction

Cognition is the process of thinking, learning and remembering. Cognitive impairment is not uncommon in later life and may be due to the normal aging process associated with physical or mental disorders. It is characterized by memory disturbance, which occurs frequently among the elderly.

Objective:

- To assess cognitive impairment among elderly in the selected rural community.
- To associate cognitive impairment with selected demographic variables.

Methodology:

Research approach: Descriptive approach.

Research design: Non experimental, descriptive research design.

Research setting: The study was conducted among individuals age group of 60 and above who were residing at a selected village, Kanchipuram district.

Population: Individuals aged 60 and above, who are residing at a selected village, Kanchipuram district.

Sample Technique: A convenient sampling technique was used to select 81 participants for the study.

Sample size: The sample size was calculated using the formula $n = \frac{4pq}{d^2}$

Subject Selection: Individuals aged 60 and above, who are residing at a selected village, Kanchipuram district, during the time of data collection.

Instrument: Section- A consisted of self structured questionnaire consisting of 9 question to assess demographic variables and Section -B includes standardized Brief Cognitive Rating Scale (BCRS) to assess the cognitive level among elderly which consist of 5 axis.

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Scoring and Interpretation:**Each axis score is interpreted as follows:**

Score	Interpretation
1.	Normal, no cognitive decline present. Average or better performance.
2.	Very mild. Subjective impairment in comparison with 5 or 10 years previous.
3.	Mild. Minimal impairment which is clinically verifiable with detailed questioning
4.	Moderate. Marked impairment which is readily evidenced clinically.
5.	Moderately Severe. Severe impairment on assesment.
6.	Sever. Very severe impairment; some residual capacity in some assesment areas.
7.	Very severe. Very severe impairment, little residual capacity elicited in assessments.

Findings: Majority of the participants were between 60-70 years of age (47%), females (64%), belonged to nuclear families (63%), supported financially by family members (60%), had watching television as their leisure time activity (53%), were able to remember family occasions (79%) and had altered vision, hearing and were using dentures (86%).

Remembering family occasions was significantly associated with Axis I: Concentration ($p=0.037$). Age, source of income and ability to remember family occasions were significantly associated with Axis II: Recent memory ($p=0.000, 0.014, 0.037$ respectively). Age and ability to remember family occasions were significantly associated with Axis III: Past memory ($p=0.001, 0.007$ respectively). Age, leisure time activity and ability to remember family occasions were significantly associated with Axis IV: Orientation ($p=0.000, 0.001, 0.000$ respectively). Age, leisure time activity and ability to remember family occasions were significantly associated with Axis V: Functioning and Self-care ($p=0.000, 0.046, 0.000$)

Discussion

Cognitive impairments impair everyday functional abilities. It is reported that there exist significant impairment in cognitive domains of concentration, recent memory, remote memory, orientation, functioning and self-care along with disorientation, disturbance in attention and recent memory¹. Moreover age related disorders accelerate cognitive impairment.

Conclusion

Elderly should be assessed for cognitive impairment and intervened appropriately. Healthy lifestyle may decrease cognitive decline among the elderly².

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Source of Funding: Self-funding and no external funding

Ethical Clearance: Department clearance was obtained from department of mental health nursing and Chettinad college of Nursing. UG Committee clearance and institutional ethical committee clearance was obtained from Chettinad university. Formal permission was be obtained from the Principal, Chettinad college of Nursing. Formal consent was obtained from the study samples before collecting the information.

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