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TITLE: HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING IN INSTITUTIONALIZED ELDERLY: AN INTERVENTION STUDY

ABSTRACT

Almost everyone, including the elderly, strive for Happiness and Subjective Well-being (SWB). The present study was undertaken to assess the Happiness and SWB of the institutionalized elderly, and administer Group and Individual activities to augment them. The purpose of the present study was to study the effectiveness of these interventions on the Happiness and SWB of the institutionalized elderly. A pretest-posttest design was used, with further division of 3 groups- Control, Group I (Group activities) and Group II (Individual activities). There were 30 participants in each group (N=90). The data was collected from old age homes using the purposive sampling technique. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) and Subjective Well-being Inventory (Sell & Nagpal, 1992) were administered. The intervention groups were given 5 different activities for a period of 1 week each, with sessions held once a week. Thereafter, the 2 tools were re-administered on all the 3 groups. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were done after ascertaining their assumptions. Bonferroni test was done for post-hoc analysis, and paired t-tests were applied to see differences between pre and post-test differences in each of the 3 groups.

FINDINGS

The results showed no significant difference between the 3 groups at the pre-intervention stage. However, it was found that the 3 groups were significantly different from each other at the post-intervention stage, indicating the efficacy of the intervention provided. For the measure of Happiness, it was seen that the control group had the lowest mean. The 2

intervention groups had significantly higher means, although they were not significantly different from each other. For the measure of SWB, Group I (group activities) had the highest mean, followed by Group II (individual activities), and the lowest mean obtained was that of the control group. Here, all the 3 groups were found to be statistically different from each other.

Paired t-tests were used to compare the pre versus post intervention stages of the 3 groups, for Happiness and SWB. There were no significant differences between the pre and post-intervention scores in the Control group, for both the measures. However, there were significant differences obtained on 3 out of 11 dimensions of SWB, in the control group. These were: Transcendence, Social Support, and Inadequate Mental Mastery. For Group I and Group II, significant differences were obtained between the pre and post-intervention conditions on both the measures, as well as all the dimensions of SWB.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it was concluded that the institutionalized elderly have an average level of Happiness and SWB. This can be enhanced through structuring of their day by including simple activities. Both, group activities and individual activities were found to be equally effective in enhancing the happiness of the institutionalized elderly. However, group activities were found to be more effective in enhancing SWB than activities done individually.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study brought forward results which are applicable to the elderly residing in institutions. It propagates the significance of an active lifestyle, and the importance of maintaining a structure in the day for the elderly. These results have important implications for administrators at various levels.