



Elders' Perceived Stress, Happiness and Life Satisfaction Amidst the Pandemic: A Correlational Study

Daisy L Obiso*

Department of Psychiatry, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

DESCRIPTION

2020 will forever be etched in history as the year the world faced a global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic brought a wave of uncertainty, fear, and challenges that impacted people of all ages. Among the most vulnerable populations were older adults, who faced unique hardships due to their diverse life experiences and increased susceptibility to the virus. Coping mechanisms and strategies adopted by older individuals during this turbulent period were critical in determining their psychological well-being and overall quality of life. In this commentary essay, we delve into the findings of a recent study that investigated the correlation between perceived stress, life satisfaction, and happiness among older adults amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The study under discussion employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data, to comprehensively understand how older adults experienced the pandemic. The researchers adapted a standardized questionnaire to assess stress, happiness, and life satisfaction among 100 elderly participants. Participants were also invited to respond to an open-ended question, revealing the sources of stress and happiness they experienced during the survey. The study's results shed light on the complex interplay of stress, happiness, and life satisfaction among older adults and its implications for promoting their well-being in the face of adversity. One of the study's key findings was the negative correlation between perceived stress and happiness and life satisfaction. While the correlation coefficients were relatively low ($r=-0.483$ for stress and happiness, and $r=-0.496$ for stress and life satisfaction), the results hold significant implications for understanding the emotional experiences of older adults during the pandemic. The negative correlation between stress and happiness underscores the toll that pandemic-induced stress can take on older adults' emotional well-being. As they navigated the uncertainties and challenges brought on by the pandemic, many older adults faced heightened stress

levels, leading to decreased happiness. Interestingly, the study also revealed a moderate negative correlation between happiness and life satisfaction ($r=-0.514$). This finding suggests that older adults with higher happiness levels were likelier to experience an increased sense of overall life satisfaction. It is possible that older adults who found joy and contentment in their everyday experiences were better equipped to cope with stressors, leading to a greater sense of satisfaction with their lives as a whole. The qualitative aspect of the research delved deeper into the specific stressors and sources of happiness experienced by older adults during the pandemic. The responses provided valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by this population. Health-related worries emerged as a prominent stressor among the elderly. With older adults at a higher risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes, the fear of infection and uncertainties surrounding their health status weighed heavily on their minds. The pandemic's impact on healthcare systems and access to medical resources further exacerbated their concerns. Another significant stressor reported by older adults was the challenge of meeting basic needs. Economic disruptions and difficulties in accessing essential goods and services affected many older individuals, causing them to worry about their financial security and access to necessities. Despite these stressors, the study also highlighted the resilience and adaptability of older adults in finding sources of happiness amidst the pandemic. The family emerged as a crucial source of joy, providing emotional support and a sense of belonging during social distancing and isolation. The presence of loved ones became even more cherished during this period of uncertainty, emphasizing the importance of social connections for older adults' well-being. Good health was also a significant contributor to happiness among older adults. The pandemic served as a reminder of the significance of maintaining physical health, and many older individuals took proactive steps to prioritize their well-being. Additionally, faith played a significant role in

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Corresponding author Daisy L Obiso, Department of Psychiatry, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines, E-mail: obisodaisy@gmail.com

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providing solace and hope during trying times. For many older adults, spirituality became a coping mechanism, offering comfort and strength in adversity. The study also highlighted the happiness derived from relationships with grandchildren. The joy of spending time with and caring for their grandchildren brought immense happiness and a sense of purpose to older adults. Financial support and gardening were also cited as happiness-inducing activities. Financial stability during uncertain times provided security and peace of mind for some. On the other hand, gardening served as a therapeutic and fulfilling activity, connecting older adults with nature and offering a sense of accomplishment. Understanding the intricacies of older adults' well-being during the pandemic is vital for crafting effective interventions and support systems. The findings of this study have several implications for promoting the well-being of older adults during times of crisis. First and foremost, addressing stress management is crucial. Providing resources and tools for coping with pandemic-related anxieties can help older adults navigate through stressful situations with greater resilience. Mindfulness practices, relaxation techniques, and cognitive-behavioural therapies tailored to the needs of older adults can be valuable in mitigating stress levels. Encouraging physical activities suitable for older individuals can have multiple benefits. Regular exercise contributes to physical health and positively influences mental well-being. Engaging in low-impact exercises, such as walking, yoga, or tai chi, can improve mood and reduce stress in older adults. Promoting community involvement and volunteerism can foster a sense of purpose and social connectedness, mitigating feelings of loneliness and isolation. Engaging older adults in volunteer activities that align with their interests and capabilities can provide a sense of fulfilment and promote a sense of belonging within the community. Additionally, ensuring that older adults have access to family care and support is vital, as family bonds play a pivotal role in

their happiness and life satisfaction. Encouraging communication and fostering strong family ties can help alleviate feelings of isolation and enhance the well-being of older adults. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unparalleled global challenge, impacting people of all ages. The journey has been unique for older adults, with distinct stressors and sources of happiness shaping their well-being. The study discussed in this commentary offers valuable insights into the interplay of stress, happiness, and life satisfaction among older adults during the pandemic. As we navigate through the pandemic and beyond, it is crucial to recognize and support the resilience of older adults. By understanding their diverse experiences and emotions, we can design targeted interventions that promote well-being, foster happiness, and enhance life satisfaction. By embracing resilience and fostering a sense of community, we can help older adults thrive despite adversity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the journey of older adults amidst the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of challenges and triumphs. While stressors have tested their resilience, sources of happiness have provided rays of hope in challenging times. The findings of this study highlight the significance of tailoring interventions to address the unique well-being needs of older adults. By embracing their resilience and providing support, we can empower older adults to navigate the pandemic and beyond with strength and positivity.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.