



Study of mindfulness and depression in old age people

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Abstract

Old age is the truth of everyone's life. In this stage, there are many changes in the life of a person, such as retirement from job, sometime death of spouse, separation from children due to their job or marriage, becoming physically weak etc. Due to these, the aged person goes through many psychological problems. Mindfulness has get attention over the past decades as a way to increase wellbeing. It can be helpful for old age life. The present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of mindfulness on depression among aged people. For this study, sample of 100 aged people in the age range on 60 to 80 years were included through purposive sampling technique from district Haridwar. The five facet mindfulness scale (Baer *et al.*, 2004) and depression scale (Karim and Tiwari, 1986) were used to measure variables. The level of mindfulness and depression was found to be lower in old age people living in old age home than in old age people living with family. Mindfulness has been seen to have a positive effect on depression.

Key Words: *Old age, Older adults, Mindfulness, Depression.*

Introduction

The number of elderly people has increased very rapidly in the last century. According to the Government of India and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), by 2050, the number of old age people in India could be 36 million, which would be more than the total population of America. This means number may increase from 8 percent in 2015 to 19 percent in 2050. This has happened because of great progress in the field of medical, due to which the mortality rate has decreased and life expectancy has increased. Old age is a fact of life through which everyone has to pass. There are many changes in a person's life at this stage, his routine life changes completely. Physical strength begins to wane, retirement is obtained from the job, in some cases death of spouse, children are away from home for education or job and sometimes children leave their old parents in old age home. In old age, people need support of family but in this changing era, where such families are becoming single, it is meaningless to expect such a thing. According to a report by "THE HINDU", after retirement, many elderly people are forced to live lives of humiliation, abuse and isolation. 37% of people are suffering from

misbehave / bad treatment, 20% of people are suffering from restricted social life, 13% of people are suffering from abuse / mental torture, 13% of people do not have basic needs, 9% of people have physical harassment/assault occurs and 8% people suffer from other forms of harassment. Many people believe that depression is common in old age (Snowdon, 2001). Depression is a natural occurrence in older people which has a profound effect on their lives. Many studies have shown that depression increases with aging (Kennedy, 1996). Depression refers to psychological health and is also related to longevity. Studies suggest that increasing depression also increases difficulties in daily life activities (Penninx *et al.*, 1998). Older people with depression have an increased risk of death (Bruce, 1994). Depression also increases difficulties in performing cognitive functions (Speck *et al.*, 1995). It is a belief that depression is associated with old age. Depression is a cause of many social, physical and psychological problems. There is substantial evidence that depression in older people increases the risk of death (Wulsin *et al.*, 1999). There is a positive correlation between depression and loneliness in the elderly population (Singh and Mishra, 2009). Depression has also been found in old age with stroke, loss of hearing, loss of vision, cardiac disease and chronic lung

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disease (Huang *et al.*, 2010). Social support, loneliness, handicap and depression are the four factors responsible for the poor quality of life of old age (Prince *et al.*, 1997). The risk of death increases when depression occurs with loneliness (Steket *et al.*, 2005). Mindfulness is a psychological concept. It is an English translation of the Pali word "sati" (in Sanskrit, memory) which deals with awareness, meditation and remembrance. Used in The Questions of King Milinda written by Thomas W. Rhy Davids. In the book of Buddhism mindfulness is considered to be the center of Buddhist meditation. It has been assumed that the mindfulness employed in modern psychology is from this tradition. In the development of mindfulness, Buddha has explained three stages (Thanissaro, 1996). These stages are: focus on the present moment; to see how things change and what are the reasons for the change; pay attention to things without attachment. In Kabat-Zinn (2003) view, "mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment". Mindfulness is a state that is promoted and nurtured by meditation practices (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). It trains to react less to experiences in the present moment. Mindfulness is related to the individual's overall experiences (i.e. positive, neutral and negative), through which the individual is able to reduce their distress and increase well-being. Mindfulness practices teach a person to identify and overcome distraction, rumination and resistance. Mental Health Foundation (2011) reported that mindfulness helps to find positive new attitudes, behaviors and solutions, to balance the ability of the body and mind and to maintain wellbeing.

Trait mindfulness is associated with positive aging expectations (Fiocco and Meisner, 2018). Mindfulness has a positive effect on mental health. In those who have high levels of mindfulness, life stress is reduced and mindfulness promotes mental health (Frias and Whyne, 2015). Lower mindfulness is associated with greater thought avoidance, which results in greater emotion deregulation (Prakash *et al.*, 2017). Low levels of mindfulness are found in substance abusers (Shorey *et al.*, 2014). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy can reduce the level of anxiety (Stevens *et*

al., 2018). There are fewer symptoms of depression when there is a higher level of mindfulness (Elliot *et al.*, 2018). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy has a positive effect on depression and anxiety in older adults (Foulket *et al.*, 2014).

Mindfulness is related to positive psychology. It motivates the person towards spirituality. In old age, the person is also attracted to it. Mindfulness eliminates many types of negativity, mindfulness can help fight old age problems and also balance their standard of living.

Objectives and Hypothesis

Objectives:

1. To assess the level of depression of old age people living in old age home and family.
2. To assess the level of mindfulness of old age people living in old age home and family.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant differences in level of depression of old age people living with their family and old age home.
2. There is no significant difference in level of mindfulness in old age people living with their family and old age home.

Materials and Methods

Sample

For this study a sample of 100 old age people in the age group of 60 to 80 years (50 people from old age home and 50 people are who living with their family) from district Haridwar. Sample was collected through purposive sampling techniques.

Tools

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire: The scale has been developed by Baer *et al.* (2006). This scale measures five factors of mindfulness. The five facets are observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. This scale has 39 items. Each item is rated on a five point scale.

Depression scale: The scale has been developed by Karim and Tiwari (1986). This scale has 96 items. Each item is rated on a five point scale.

Results and Discussions

Mean and standard deviation of depression of people living in old age home (207.52, 77.97) and people living with their family is (98.64, 59.57) and



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t-value is 7.85. This shows significant difference in the level of Depression of old age people living with their family and old age home. Hypothesis-1 is rejected and result shows that there is significant difference in level of Depression in old age people living with their family and old age home. The level of Depression is high in the old age people living in old age home. Mean and standard deviation of mindfulness of people living in old age home (99.20, 11.77) and

people living with their family is (155.40, 11.22) and *t*-value is 24.43. This shows significant difference in the level of mindfulness of old age people living with their family and old age home. Hypothesis-2 is rejected and result shows that there is significant difference in level of mindfulness in old age people living with their family and old age home. The level of mindfulness is low in the old age people living in old age home.

Table-1. Mean, standard deviation, standard error mean and *t*-value of Depression of old age people living with their family and old age home.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	<i>t</i> -value
Depression	people living in old age home	50	207.52	77.97	11.03	7.85**
	people living with their family	50	98.64	59.57	8.42	

**significance at the level of 0.01

Table-2. Mean, standard deviation, standard error mean and *t*-value of mindfulness of old age people living with their family and old age home.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	<i>t</i> -value
Mindfulness	people living in old age home	50	99.20	11.77	1.66	24.43**
	people living with their family	50	155.40	11.22	1.58	

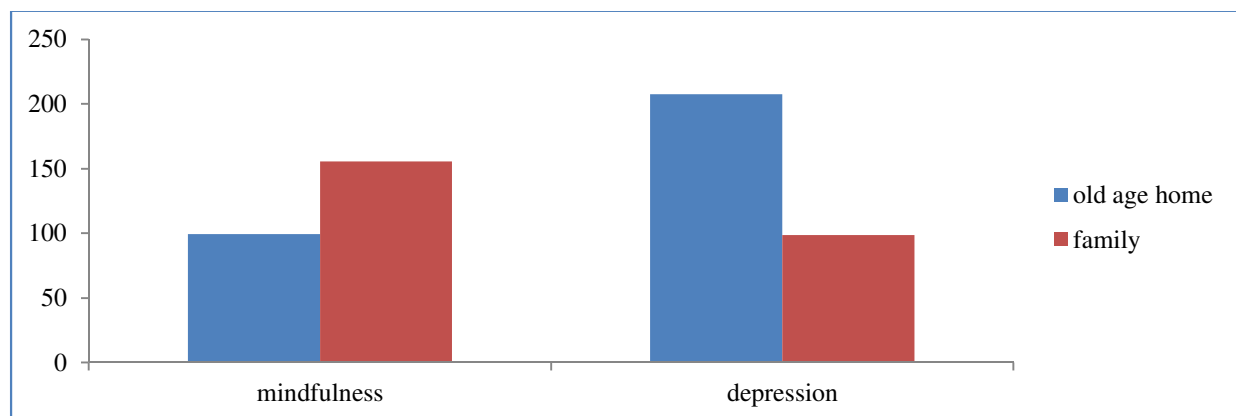


Fig 1. Bar diagram of mean score of mindfulness and depression of old age people living with their family and old age home.

(Mean of old age people who live in old age home is low on mindfulness and high on depression.)

Conclusion

Older people who live in an old age home tend to have more depression than individuals who live with family and also have relatively low level of mindfulness. Study of Frias and Whyne (2015) supports present study. The findings of their research revealed that Mindfulness was positively related to mental health. Study of Elliot *et al.*

(2018), support present study. The findings of their research revealed that greater mindfulness was associated with fewer depressive symptoms.

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