

Effect of Dependency on Self-esteem among People with Dementia at the Dementia Day Care Centre.

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Abstract:

Background: Dementia is known as a serious disorder that commonly appears in aged individuals. The cognitive impairment of the individuals creates difficulties in performing daily activities and tends them to depend on a caregiver to guide and help them to complete their chores. The level of dependency predicts the self-esteem of the dementia people. Objective: The aim of the study was to find the relationship between dependency and self-esteem of the PWD (People with dementia) in Dementia Day Care Centre. Methods: The study was done on 40 PWDs aged 50 years and above with mild to moderate dementia in the Dementia Day Care Centre. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was given to the PWD to assess their level of self-esteem and Care Dependency Scale was given to their respective caregivers to assess the dependency level of the dementia people. The study variables were gender, ethnicity, age and educational level, stage of dementia, total of dependency score and total of self-esteem score. Results: The total number of PWD participated in this study was 40. More than half (60%) of the PWD were female and 40% were male. Chinese were the majority among the patients. Most of them were aged 70 and above. 85% of the patients were educated. There is a significant positive relationship between dependency and self-esteem with the p-value of .034, where $p < .05$. Conclusion: Self-esteem is highly influenced by the dependency of the PWD. Therefore, the higher the dependency, the lower the self-esteem of the PWD. More awareness should be created among the public so that they know how much the demented person depends on others and their perception of their own self.

Keywords: dementia, caregiver, dependency, self-esteem

Introduction

Dementia is a serious disorder that commonly appears in aged individuals.¹ World Alzheimer Report 2015 stated that 46.8 million people were living with

dementia worldwide. This figure will reach 74.7 million by 2030 and 131.5 million by 2050.⁴ Health Profile Malaysia reported that dementia was the 7th cause of death in the rate of 23.73 per 100,000 population in 2016.⁵ In Malaysia, based on UN data on the projected population of over 30 million people, the

number of people with dementia is estimated at 123 thousand in the year 2015 and to over 261 thousand by year 2030 and to 590 thousand by the year 2050. Dementia is therefore a national problem that is constantly growing in magnitude due to demographic changes. Malaysia is undergoing rapid demographic change with increasing number of elderly population, hence age related disease like dementia is expected to increase (Douzenis, 2008).

Dementia is a neurocognitive disorder which affects the brain, weakens the memory and produces personality changes.² Based on the World Alzheimer Report 2009, cognitive deficits of People with Dementia (PWD) create difficulties in performing their daily activities compelling them to depend on others for their basic activities of daily living³.

There are four factors affecting the quality of life of PWD. The factors are relationships (together vs alone), aim in life today (purposeful vs aimless), wellness perspective (well vs ill) and sense of place (located vs unsettled).⁶ These factors can create fear of falls and turn out to be dependent on others.⁷ It has been found that the dependency level has a greater impact on the demented persons' health-related quality of life.⁸

People with dementia need the support of caregivers to carry out their daily chores. A caregiver is a person who cooks meals for a loved one, reminds the loved one to take medications and on the daily tasks, providing companionship to the loved one who has lost the social contacts.⁹ The caregivers are the best persons to report the level of dependency in people with dementia.

Dependency is an important concept in every one's life. The level of dependency on others reflect an individual's self-esteem.

METHODS

This was a cross sectional study conducted among people with dementia (PWD) at the dementia daycare center and their respective

Besides, dependency is a phenomena of aging which was seen as a loss in both mental and physical functioning. It is mentioned that there are three types of dependency which are structured, physical and behavioral dependency. Structured dependency is created by the social structures in a society and used by sociologists and social demographers. The physical dependency is caused by diseases of old age and behavioral dependency based on psychological studies has three etiologies – learned helplessness, learned dependency and selective optimization with reinforcement.¹⁰ Dependency in reference to different age groups had been used in pedagogy, social psychology, psychiatry and nursing.¹¹

The concept of self-esteem was first developed in 1890 by the psychologist, James as one's sense of pride or self-respect. Self-esteem has been defined as a person's overall sense of self-worth and personal value.¹² Self-esteem can be sequenced and quantified at different levels as high, medium or low.¹³ It was stated that people with high self-esteem are more adept to maintain high feeling of self-worth compared to people with low self-esteem¹⁴ and high self-esteem is highly favorable evaluation of the self, whereas low self-esteem is unfavorable judgement of the self.¹⁵ It was observed that individuals experience low self-esteem when they are dependent on others for support and assistance.¹⁶ It has been found that most patients with mental illness will have low self-esteem.¹⁷

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship of dependency with self-esteem among people with dementia in Dementia in Day Care Centre.

caregivers and data were collected through questionnaires. People with mild and moderate dementia, based on their clinical assessment were chosen among the people

attending dementia day care center, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. All of them were 50 years old and above. Demographic information obtained included gender, ethnicity, age, educational level and stage of dementia. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was given to the PWD to assess their level of self-esteem. The questions in the questionnaire were explained to them and a Chinese staff read out the Chinese version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale for those who did not understand English and Malay Language. The care dependency scale (proxy version) was used among the caregivers to assess the dependency level of the patients. The details about the caregivers were collected and the dependency survey was conducted at the dementia day care centre. As the centre provides transport for some of the PWD, it was not possible to reach all the caregivers

Results

The demographic data of the dementia patients are shown in Table 1. There were no significant relationship between self-esteem and demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, education level and stage of dementia. Most of them (82.5%) were 70 years old and above with female predominance of 33 (60%) and Majority of them were Chinese 31(77%). The severity of dementia was not significantly related to self-esteem.

DISCUSSION

Most of the PWD attending day care were of older age because of the nature of the disease most prevalent among the elderly population. Elderly people most often blame and look down upon themselves when they are unable to perform their daily activities.¹⁸ Most of them were females, which is in accordance with a study that higher number of women experience Alzheimer's disease compared to men because women's lifespan is higher than men ¹⁹. More than ¾ of the PWD were Chinese, which is expected because of elderly Chinese predominance in Ipoh. Most

for the face-to-face data collection. In this situation, data were collected through the phone. The score of 68 and below was considered as dependent. The score of 69 and above was considered as independent. Both the data from the PWD and the caregivers were recorded.

The collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) version 19. Descriptive data were summarized using frequency tables.. Shapiro Wilk test was used to test the normality. Fisher's exact test was used to find the association between dependency and self-esteem among the PWD when the expected frequency in any cell was < 5. A p value of <0.05 was considered as statistically significant. Spearman's correlation was used to find out the relationship between dependency and self-esteem among the PWD. The association between dependency and self-esteem of PWD is represented in Table 2. Those with high level of dependency showed significantly lower self-esteem (P=0.034).

The cut off score for the self-esteem was determined using ROC curve with sensitivity for the score 29.5 was 87.5% and specificity was 80%. The level of dependency was assessed using CDS (+REF). Based on the scale, 69 and above was considered independent.

of PWD had either primary or secondary level education. Studies have shown that the lower educational attainment and less complex occupational activities have been found to be associated with cognitive decline and dementia risks.^{20, 21} This cannot be concluded definitely because of the small sample size in this study (22 mild and 18 moderate dementia people). It has been found that low self-esteem were more frequent in the late stages of dementia.²² However, this study did not show such correlation probably due to small sample size of PWD. The caregivers knew better about

the dependency level of their loved ones with dementia, because they were the ones who accompany them throughout the day⁹. Our study observed significant relationship of decreased self-esteem with increased level of dependence and the persons had a negative perception about their self as mentioned in the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Studies

with large number of PWD should be done to find the relationship between the dependency and self-esteem and to establish our findings. Rehabilitation activities should be promoted to improve the activities of daily living of PWD, which in turn could improve one's self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

The level of dependency of PWD is an important predictor of self-esteem which in turn affects their quality of life. Our study, with small sample size showed that PWD with high dependency level have low self-

esteem. This observation leads to conduct further studies with larger sample among PWD to establish our findings. Dementia day care centers can play a vital role in providing rehabilitation and reduce dependency among PWD

Table 1: Association of demographic characteristics and self-esteem

Characteristics	Self-esteem		Total N (%)	P
	High self-esteem N (%)	Low self-esteem N (%)		
Age				
69 years old and below	*1 (14.3%)	6 (85.7%)	7 (17.5%)	0.672
70 years old and above	8 (24.2%)	25 (75.8%)	33 (82.5%)	
Gender				
Male	5 (31.3%)	11 (68.8%)	16 (40.0%)	0.441
Female	*4 (16.7%)	20 (83.3%)	24 (60.0%)	
Ethnicity				
Malays	0 (0.0%)	*1 (100.0%)	1 (2.5%)	0.500
Chinese	6 (19.4%)	25 (80.6%)	31 (77.5%)	
Indians	*3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	8 (20.0%)	
Education Level				
Primary and below	*3 (23.1%)	10 (76.9%)	13 (32.5%)	0.872
Secondary	*4 (19.0%)	17 (81.0%)	21 (52.5%)	
Tertiary	*2 (33.3%)	*4 (66.7%)	6 (15.0%)	
Stage of Dementia				
Mild	5 (22.7%)	17 (77.3%)	22 (55.0%)	1.000
Moderate	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18 (45.0%)	

* Fisher's Exact Test

**p-value <0.05

Table 2: Association between dependency and self-esteem among the dementia patients

	¶Self-esteem		Total N (%)	P
	High self-esteem N (%)	Low self-esteem N (%)		
€Dependency				
Independent	*4 (57.1%)	*8 (42.9%)	7 (17.5%)	**0.034
Dependent	5 (15.2%)	28 (84.8%)	33 (82.5%)	
	9 (22.5%)	31 (77.5%)		

* Fisher's Exact Test

** p-value < 0.05

¶ Self-esteem cut off <29.5

€ Dependency cut off >69.0

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