

## **The psychological wellbeing of the old adults: comparative study between the residents and non-residents in the nursing house**

**DJEFFAL Meriem<sup>1</sup>BOUDIA Leila<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research laboratory in psychology and educational - Oran University 02 , Faculty of Social Sciences (Algeria)- djefal.meryam@univ-oran2.dz

<sup>2</sup>Population Strategies and Sustainable Development Laboratory -Oran University 02 , Faculty of Social Sciences 1 (Algeria)- boudia.leila@univ-oran2.dz

Received: 07/2023, Published: 07/2023

---

### **Abstract:**

This paper tackles the differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those who reside with their families. In this context, the psychological wellbeing includes the psychological health and the absence of psychological troubles. In so doing, we relied on the descriptive method and used the Personal Wellbeing Index on a sample of 15 old adults who had been chosen on purpose from the nursing house in Ain el Assel (Taref) and 15 old adults living with their families. Our findings show that there are differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those residing with their families.

**Key words:** psychological wellbeing; the old adult; the nursing houses.

---

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Old adulthood is the last phase in life. It is characterized with many psychological, social, relational, and health features. Therefore, this phase is very important and must be subject of research with all its variables. In this line, the old adult faces an increasing number of main changes in his life including retirement, loss of the beloved people, and the functional changes; all this affects his psychological health. Therefore, it is necessary to know how to deal with these changes to maintain a good health (<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com>). The latter is the outcome of many factors for the old adult and it is not a typical and common feature as it differs from one person to another according to the various factors they face (Kamel Kacem, 2019, p. 605).

In addition, the old adulthood requires social and psychological needs that face a set of problems that impose the nature of the phase the person lives. In this regard, old adulthood will be a new phase in the beginning obliging the person to cope with it by confronting the problems that hinder him from achieving the social and psychological needs. Thus, the old adult uses various strategies to deal with this period that is generally characterized with laziness and lack of activity (Bahri & Kharmouche, 2019, p. 91). Generally speaking, the family is the natural place where the individual feels security, belonging, care, acceptance, and respect regardless his age or strength. Therefore, the weak person is the most one in need for life within a coherent family that accepts and cares for him. In this context, the old adults

generally live with their families regardless their social status. Nevertheless, some of them live in the nursing houses for various reasons (Maamria & Khezzar, 2009, p. 74).

Life within a family makes the individual feel better than life in a center that lacks emotional satisfaction, warm social relations, and psychological support; what causes psychological and physical troubles. Hence, this paper sheds light on the psychological wellbeing between the old adults living within their families and those residing in the nursing houses. To do so, we raise the following question: “Are their differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those living with their families?”

## **2. Hypothesis of the study:**

To answer the problematic of the study, we hypothesize that:

- There are differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those living with their families.

## **3. Aims and importance of the study:**

The aims and importance of the study lie within the fact that:

- It seeks revealing the differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those living with their families.
- It is a scientific basis for future researches as it reveals the psychological needs of the old adults.
- The issue of the old adults is not individual and does not concern one person; rather, it is a social and human issue for the whole society.
- The study seeks setting counselling, preventive, and therapeutic programs to improve the care for the old adults.

## **4. Concepts of the study:**

The concepts of the study are like the theoretical and scientific backgrounds of the research. The concepts of this paper are as follows:

### **4.1 The psychological wellbeing:**

Diener & Lucas confirm that the psychological wellbeing requires satisfaction with life, the existence of positive feelings, and the absence of negative feelings. In addition, its concept can be summed up in:

- The increase of the pleasure experiences.
- Lack of unpleasant experiences.
- Satisfaction with life (Telemceni, 2015, p. 29)

Besides, Sliegan (2002) identified 03 paths for happiness and psychological wellbeing according to the positive psychology as follows:

- Positive emotions.
- Pleasure.
- Engagement.

The most people feeling the psychological wellbeing are those who follow these paths. In addition, he adds that happiness cannot be achieved if one path is followed without the others (Telemceni, op. cit., p.29).

#### **4.2 The old adult:**

He is the person advanced in age and unable to take care of himself due to age, not to a disability (Al Harbi, 2016, p. 05).

#### **4.3 The nursing houses:**

They are facilities authorized by the competent authorities to host, care, and provide the necessary services for the old adults (The Project of the Typical Law for the Old Adults Rights, 2002, p. 02). The need for these facilities emerged due to the decrease of the traditional role of the family towards the old adults, and due to the unsatisfaction of the needs. Besides, the nursing house is a governmental or quasi-governmental social institution that provides care for the male and female old adults including health, social, psychological, cultural, and recreational aspects. It had been established as a sign of the need for the society's responsibility towards its individuals. Its existence in the society, multiplicity of missions, and commitment to the good professional bases and the social needs and goals show a high degree of development (Badra, 2014, p. 20).

### **4. Literature review:**

#### **4.1 The study of Merz & Consedine, 2009 “The Association of Family Support and Wellbeing in Later Life Depends on Adults Attachment Style”:**

The study was carried out in USA and aimed at finding the relation between the family support and the wellbeing for the old adults. The sample included 1118 individuals from different ethnicities and races. The authors used a questionnaire for the personal information, a tool to measure the functional cognitive processes, a tool to measure the family support that includes the emotional support and the performance support, a tool of 30 statements to measure the communication style, and a tool of 30 statements to measure the feeling of social wellbeing and 10 various feelings. Findings showed that the emotional and performance styles of the family and the communication style might predict the extent of the psychological wellbeing of the old adult. Besides, the emotional support is generally linked to high levels of wellbeing while the performance support is linked to a lack of the wellbeing.

#### **4.2 The study of Ghanem (2002) “the perceived social support and its relation with the psychological loneliness and depression of the old adults residing in nursing houses and in natural families”:**

The study took place in Egypt and aimed at findings the relation between the perceived social support and the psychological loneliness and depression of the old adults. The sample included 100 old adults aged between 60 and 74 from nursing houses and from normal families. The author used the perceived social support scale, the psychological loneliness scale, and Beck's Depression Inventory. Findings showed that the old adults living in normal families perceive the social support and have a better support from the social complementarity compared to those living in nursing houses. Besides, the perception of the psychological loneliness and depression increases for the old adults residing in the nursing houses.

## **6. The changes for the old adults:**

Various social, psychological, and biological changes determine the level of the psychological health of anybody at any time. In addition to the pressures of the typical life, many old adults lose ability to live independently due to their limited movement, the chronic pain, the weakness, and other physical and psychological problems. Besides, they need long term care as they are subject to accidents, sadness, melancholy, decrease of the socioeconomic status, or disability. All these factors may lead to loneliness, dependence, alienation, and psychological narrowness (<https://www.who.int/ar/news>). In addition, we can notice some social changes for the old adults such as the lack of the social interests, mistrust in their ability to change the social circumstances, and the loss of the position inside the family. When the old adults is unable to continue his social roles, he shall suffer loneliness, which drains his life, personal relations, general participations, and activities.

In this context, among the psychological characteristics of the old adults we find the excessive sensitivity, admiration of the past, indifference, and mockery. Some aspects manifest in the low attention, narrow interests, increase of emotionality, and unsupport of noise. Besides, the need for the feeling of material and moral security increases all along with the need for attention. Moreover, the old adult forgets the events of the near past and remembers those of the old past. Furthermore, his thinking and decision-making become slow. In this line, he gets overwhelmed by fears of disability and maladaptation with the material and the immaterial things such as the daily routine or the thinking style. The old adult refuses changing the house or some social traditions; this feature increases with the advancement in age (Samir Badra, 2014, p. 13).

## **7. The care for the old adults:**

### **7.1 The psychological care:**

It is one of the aspects of the multidimensional care the society owes to the old adults who have contributed to the development and achievements of the society with their efforts, activities, and sacrifices in years. Therefore, the old adults must receive affection and love because the emotional atmosphere is one of the most important factors that affect their health. It is among the important and strong points for the self-esteem. Hence, the care providers must pay attention to the psychological aspects because old adulthood is like childhood regarding satisfaction and affection. In addition, the old adults' dependence on the other increases due to the health and physical changes that make them unable to do their daily chores. Hence, the feelings of affection, security, and protection towards them make them comfortable (Sebkhaoui, 2007, p. 35).

### **7.2 The healthcare:**

The old adults' healthcare is one of the important points in life because they face sharp pressures due to the changes, the physical degradation, and the diseases. The healthcare is linked to the degradation of the health state compared to the previous age phases. Besides, it is related to the weakness, narrow activities, and failure in maintaining the usual activities. The decrease in the immunity and ability to resist leads to many diseases. In this regard, the old adults' healthcare is based on:

- Preventive care: the old adults need special guidance about how to maintain a good health and how to follow the lifestyles that suit their ages. Besides, they must know how to prevent the diseases and chronic problems. In addition, we must raise their awareness about the healthy nutrition.
- Therapeutic care: this includes the periodical medical checks, the necessary treatment, and the habilitation services (Sebkhaoui, op. cit, p. 35).

### **7. The social care:**

This category needs a special social care from the family and other points as follows:

- Cooperation: the decent care must be provided for the old adults as they find difficulties in exercising their tasks and lives due to the weakness.
- Social relations: strengthening the social relations for the old adults is necessary as this phase that is marked with retirement and alienation leads to the increase of the feeling of horror . Undoubtedly, the old adult needs more social relations to face the social changes.
- The social status: maintaining the social status and the leading role of the old adults is necessary. It can be achieved through including them in decision making so that we can enrich the innovation processes and the social development (Ghanem, 2019, p. 621).

The UN had previously issued a set of principles that represent the needs and rights of the old adults as follows:

- The principle of participation: it provides for the right of the old adults to integrate in the society, participate actively according to their abilities, and establish bodies and associations for them.
- The principle of care: it provides for the right of the old adults to take advantage of the services of familial and social care and protection, getting the healthcare and social and legal services, and enjoying the human rights.
- The principle of satisfaction: it provides for the old adults to take advantage of the chances of developing their abilities and of the educational, cultural, and recreational resources in the society.
- The principle of dignity: it provides for the right of the old adults to a decent life with security and good treatment regardless their ages, ethnicity, race, disability, or any other case. Besides, it provides for estimating their economic contribution.

### **8. Method of the study:**

The study uses the analytical descriptive method, as it is the most suitable for qualitatively and quantitatively determining, estimating, and expressing the psychological characteristics of people.

### **9. Sample of the study:**

The population of the study includes the old adults. Due to the wide geographical region of the population, it is difficult to cover all the old adults. Therefore, we chose a sample on purpose in order to represent the population. Besides, we chose the Wilaya of Tarf to represent the population taking into consideration the following criteria:

- The old adult must be +60.
- The old adult must have a good health to answer the questionnaire.
- The old adult must accept answering the questionnaire.

In this context, the old adults from the nursing house in Ain el Assel were 15 and had been chosen on purpose. On the other hand, the old adults who reside with their families were not statistically limited. Hence, we took 15 people to represent the old adults living with their families in Tarf.

**Table 01.** Characteristics of the study sample

Characteristics	Level	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	17	56.67
	Female	13	43.3
	Total	30	100
Age	60-70	21	70
	71-80	6	20
	+81	3	10
	Total	30	100

Table 01 shows that the sample is not homogenous as 56.67% are males while the rest are females. Besides, 70% are between 60 and 70 years old, 20% are between 71 and 80 years old, while 10% are more than 81 years old.

**10. Tools of the study:**

We applied the scale of the old adults’ adjustment of Samia Qattan (1982) because the expression “psychological adjustment” is close to the psychological wellbeing. The scale was adapted to the Arabic settings by Samia Qattan to measure the psychological adjustment and the social adjustment. It is made up of 40 statements as follows:

- The psychological adjustment: it has 20 statements and is represented by the singleton statements.
- The social adjustment: it has 20 statements and is represented by the even statements.

Besides, we used interviews due to the low educational level of some members of the sample.

**11. Presentation of the study results:**

The study hypothesis states that “There are differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those living with their families”

**Table 02:** T test results of the main hypothesis

Variable	Type	Size of the sample	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Table T	Probabilistic value
Social wellbeing	Old adults in the nursing houses	15	2.9909	0.01692	28	0.0001	0.05

	Old adults with their families	15	1.9723	0.71986			
--	--------------------------------	----	--------	---------	--	--	--

Table 02 shows that T test is less than the significance level 0.05. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one. This confirms the 1<sup>st</sup> sub-hypothesis and means that there are differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those living with their families.

## 12. Analysis and interpretation of the results:

Results show that T test is less than the significance level 0.05. Thus, there are differences regarding the psychological wellbeing between the old adults residing in the nursing houses and those living with their families. We can interpret this saying that as long as the old adult lives inside a natural family, he shall be better than in a nursing house that lacks the emotional satisfaction, the warm social relations, and the psychological support; what makes him subject to psychological and physical troubles (Maamria & Khezzar, 2009, p. 74). The studies showed that the physical weakness of the old adults is related to the social and psychological pressures he faces and that the unsuitable factors such as alienation, economic difficulties, neglect, and deprivation play a big role in making the old adulthood a period for the psychological and physical deterioration. Nevertheless, if the old adults know that they are accepted and respected, they shall live a strong and happy phase (Sonni, 2014, p. 88).

In addition, people agree on the necessity of care for the children. Therefore, individuals, societies, and institutions must be also aware about the necessity of the same care for the old adults because this phase makes the individual weak with less efficiency and mental and physical abilities. Moreover, the old adult is more subject to psychological and physical problems that make him in need for the full physical and psychological care (Maamria & Kherraz, op. cit, p. 74).

## 13. CONCLUSION:

Psychological wellbeing is a basic element for the adjustment and balance of the individual in general, and the old adult in particular inside his family or the nursing houses. The old adulthood requires care, good psychological health, and balance that lead to the feeling of psychological comfort and satisfaction with life in general.

## 14. Bibliography:

- Kamel Kacem, Intissar (2019), the social alienation of the old adults in the light of some variables, Iraq, center of the psychological researches, Vol. 03 (30).
- Bahri, Saber & Kharmouche, Mona (2019), the reality of the Algerian old adult in the need for the most important psychological and social needs, University of Jijel, journal of studies in human and society sciences, Vol. 02 (4).
- Maamria, Bachir & Khezzar, Abdel Hamid (2009), the physical and psychological troubles of the old adult, Tunisia, journal of the Arabic psychological sciences net, 23.

- Telemceni, Fatima (2015), the personal psychological wellbeing of the university students in the light of the socioeconomic level and the self-esteem, University of Oran, PhD thesis in educational psychology.
- Al Harbi, May Bint Mohamed Hilal (2016), the care to the old adult from a Quranic perspective: an interpretative study, University of Al Azhar, PhD thesis.
- Samir Badra, Sohad (2014), the social-psychological support and its relation with the psychological needs and satisfaction with life for the old adults, University of Damascus, PhD thesis in psychological counselling.
- Sebkhaoi, Khadija (2007), the social change and its effect on the old adults destitution, field study in the streets of Central Algiers, University of Algiers, Magister thesis in criminal sociology.
- Ghanem Saliha (2019), the role of the Algerian family in the social care for the old adults, University of El Ouedi, Journal of the researcher in the human and social sciences, (12).
- Sonni, Ahmed (2014), the self-esteem and its relation with the psychological adjustment of the old adults, field study on a sample of the old adults in the nursing houses, Magister thesis in familial psychology, University of Oran 02.
- <https://weebcache.googleusercontent.com>.
- The Project of the Typical Law for the Old Adults Rights, (2002), [https://social.un.org/ageing-working\\_group/documents/fourth/UAELawSchool](https://social.un.org/ageing-working_group/documents/fourth/UAELawSchool)
- <https://www.who.int/ar/news>