Impact of spirituality on mental health in old age

Dr. Rakesh Ashok More
Associate Professor & Head,
Department of Psychology, MES Abasaheb Garware College (Autonomous),
Pune Maharashtra, India
Email: - rampsyc@gmail.com

Abstract: *Spiritually is about how we make sense of our past, present and future, whether this is within an organized religion, with a non-religious group, or as an individual. Our spirituality embraces our ideas about who we are and our purpose in life. Spirituality has been identified as an important factor In an individual's perception of quality of life, and in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and has been defined as a way of being in the world. High levels of spirituality have been found to be associated with mental health indicators, such as purpose in life, self-esteem, and social skills. Spirituality In old age has several benefits to be attained, not only for the Individual, but also for society. These benefits include: quality of life, bridging the generational gap, and meeting older peoples' needs.*

Key Words: *Spirituality, Self esteem, Quality of life, Quality of life.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The later years of life are considered as the period when one takes stock of one's whole life to find meaning and to maintain a sense of identity and peace in the face of one's imminent death. This life review can have a spiritual significance, not only for seniors themselves but also for everyone in contact with seniors. Spirituality is often focused in particular areas for older people, who may have faced bereavement and the inevitability of death, but who also experience the joy of significant milestones and life events. Many older people strive for reconciliation with others and with God for the meaning of their own lives in the context of a greater whole. To support for any of these issues is often available from places of worship such as mosques, churches, synagogues and temples. Though growing old is a natural process but it produces a range of reactions in different people. One may feel positive about it, one may feel some dread or anxiety; others have mixed feelings. Old age may be defined as, "the witness of a lifetime of experience" (National Advisory Council, 1992 b). To put it succinctly aging presents humans with an accumulation of burdens at the same time that certain internal and external resources are diminished (Birren, 1988). There are consensuses on the fact that good old age may be found through preservation of health, self-realization, or it may be found through the spirituality. It was evidence that older experiencing high levels of stress, report more favorable well-being in conjunction with high levels of spiritual support (Maton et al, 1985). Spiritually is about how we make sense of our past, present and future, whether this is within an organized religion, with a non-religious group, or as an individual. Our spirituality embraces our ideas about who we are and our purpose in life. Spirituality has been identified as an important factor in an individual's perception of quality of life, and in maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Levine, 1983), and has been defined as a way of being in the world. High levels of spirituality have been found to be associated with mental health. indicators, such as purpose in life, self-esteem, and social skills (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). Spirituality in old age has several benefits to be attained, not only for the individual, but also for society. These benefits include: quality of life, bridging the generational gap, and meeting older peoples' needs.

Quality of Life:

Spirituality is related not only to quality of life, but also to the will to live (Hooyman et al, 1996). In other words, many older adults seem to have come to a place in their lives where they have achieved peace with themselves and with the world in which they live. They maintain a very strong will to live, but also, these individuals have acquired a coping mechanism that provides a source of strength for themselves in difficult times and stressful life events. These stressful life events may include a decline in one's health, or the death of a spouse.

2. CONCLUSIONS: Relationships with other people to form the spiritual web of our lives, with crucial strands being marriages, partnerships, family, and friends. According to many religious traditions, our deepest values are expressed through these essential bonds (Brussat, 1998). In other words, when the older adult shares wisdom and experiential learning with younger persons, there is a bridging of the generational gap and enhanced mutual understanding. Meeting Older People's Needs.

Even though the older adult may feel bombarded with life's burdens and stressors simultaneously, they are able to employ strategies through their spirituality that enables them to cope. Many older adults are without any form of formal or informal support and cope entirely through spiritual support.

REFERENCES:

1. Birren, J. (1988). A contribution to the theory of aging: As a counterpart to development. In
2. Hooyman et. Al., (1996). Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective, 4th edition, ISBN 0205167764, Allyn and Bacon (Boston)
3. J. Birren & V. Bengston, (Eds.), Emergent Theories of Aging (pp. 153-176). New York: Springer. Brussat, 1998; Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life, New York: Touchstone
4. Levine, (1983). Aging with attitude: growing older with dignity and vitality, Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road, West Port, CT 06881
5. Maton, K., Ira, P., Kenneth, I. & Robert, H. (1984). Religion and prevention in mental health: research, vision, and action, The Howorth press, INC., 10 Alice street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580 USA
6. Paloutzian & Ellison, (1982). Loneliness, spiritual well-being and the quality of life. In Peplau, L. & Perlman, D. (Eds.). Loneliness: A Sourcebook of Current Theory, Research and Therapy. (pp.224-237). NY: John Wiley and Sons