

# Level of Stress among Institutionalized and Non Institutionalized Elderly Women

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**Abstract – Stress is an emotion which brings a change in ones living. It is needed for survival but the level of stress an individual experience matters for a normal life. It demands a person to get adjusted to the external and internal stressors. Stressors are the factors which lead to stress. They are frustration, pressure and conflict. Stress is a common factor every one of us experience in day to day living. Level of stress is correlated with the developmental stages, living conditions, and many external and biological factors. Stress level may be high among middle aged when compared to old age or vice versa depending upon the predisposing factors of a person's stress. Levels of stress are always associated with our mental, physical, emotional and social well being. Based on the above idea the present study aims to find out the Level of Stress among elderly women living in Institutionalized and living in family (Non-Institutionalized). Simple random sampling technique was applied to select the sample of 100 elderly women living in Institutions (Old age homes) and 100 elderly women living in Non- Institutions (living in home). An exploratory design was adopted for the study. Personal Stress source inventory developed by Arun k Singh, Ashish K Singh and Aparna Singh along with the Information Schedule prepared by the researcher was used. The obtained results show that Institutionalized and Non Institutionalized elderly Women differ in their Level of Stress.**

**Keywords: Stress, Institutionalized Elderly Women and Non-Institutionalized Elderly Women**

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## INTRODUCTION

Stress is a feeling of pressure, tension, worry causing physical, social, psychological and emotional distress to an individual. Stress is necessary for our survival but when it goes beyond the tolerance level it might lead to so many psychological problems. Level of stress varies due to so many factors like age, physical strength, living condition, financial condition, marital status, peer pressure, academic pressure, sudden loss or death of a loved person, nature of stressors and length of the stress etc. Level of Stress in old age is gradually increasing these days as the life style, security and economic commitment, social life and gathering is influencing them.

Stress level in old age mostly associated with the living conditions. As the emotional, personal and physical comforts are met the stress is less and vice versa.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Weintraub Ruskin (2010) study shows that Stress in oldage impairs the ability to deal with subsequent life

stress and to negotiate the development states of later life successfully. It can stem from trauma at any point in life. Symptoms may be continuous to episodic or mild to severe, and the disorder may be acute or chronic. As the traumatic life incidents increases the psychiatric illness predispose to the development. Certain personality traits and good psychosocial support protect against those traumatic life situations. Elderly individuals do not appear more predisposed than young person to develop stress disorder. The best treatment for this is the psychotherapies like Antidepressants, group therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy and family therapies. Although till date no systematic and controlled research has been done on the treatment of stress disorder in this age group.

## METHOD

### Problem:

Level of Stress among Institutionalized and Non institutionalized elderly women.

**Aim & Objective:**

1. To study the level of stress among Institutionalized elderly women and Non institutionalized elderly women
2. To compare Institutionalized elderly women and Non institutionalized elderly women on Level of Stress

**Hypothesis:**

"There is a significant difference between Level of Stress in Institutionalized and Non Institutionalized elderly women".

**Research design:**

The present study is applying the exploratory design.

**Variables:**

Independent Variable: Elderly women living in Institutionalized and elderly women living at home with their family members

Dependent Variable: Ranges of Stress from mild to moderate to severe levels.

**Sample:** The present study consists of 200 elderly women (100 Institutionalized elderly women and 100 Non institutionalized elderly women) located in and around Bengaluru city. Only the elderly women living in institutions with minimum period of 6 months were considered for the study.

**Table 1: Shows the Socio Demographic details of the sample.**

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Institutionalized elderly</i>	<i>Non-Institutionalized elderly</i>
<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>N=100</i>	<i>N=100</i>
<i>Age Range</i>	<i>60-86</i>	<i>60-86</i>
<i>Geographic Location</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Urban</i>

**MATERIALS:**

Stress source inventory: Developed by Arun k Singh, Ashish K Singh and Aparna Singh. Responses marked by the subject are scored as Seldom-1, Sometimes- 2, frequently -3, Unmarked items are given a zero score. Subsequently, scores earned by the subjects on every marked item are added together to get a total raw score. Higher the score, higher is the magnitude of personal stress. Likewise, lower the score, lower is the magnitude of personal stress. The maximum score on personal stress inventory is 105.

**PROCEDURE:**

The subjects were personally contacted to get the consent. Purpose of the study was explained, and rapport was established. Demographic details were collected using Information schedule developed by the researcher and the Stress source inventory developed by Arun k Singh, Ashish K Singh and Aparna Singh was administered. Before administering the questionnaire, the participants could clarify their doubts, if any. After the completion of responses, the questionnaires were collected and analyzed using suitable statistical methods.

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

To meet the objective of the study, comparison was made on the level of stress of institutionalized elderly and non institutionalized elderly women. To find out the difference between the two groups 't' test was calculated, the obtained results were shown in the Table 2 and discussed.

**Table 2: Shows the Mean, SD and 't' value of Institutionalized elderly and Non institutionalized elderly women on Level of Stress.**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>'t' value</b>
<i>Level of stress</i>	<i>Institutionalized elderly women (n=100)</i>	<i>40.08</i>	<i>10.37</i>	<i>8.41**</i>
	<i>Institutionalized elderly women (n=100)</i>	<i>30.45</i>	<i>4.83</i>	

Significant at 0.01

Considering the level of Stress scores, From the table it shows that the Institutionalized elderly women has obtained a mean scores of 40.08 with the SD being 10.37 and the Non institutionalized elderly women has obtained a mean scores of 30.45 with the SD being 4.83. Institutionalized elderly women have obtained higher mean scores than Non institutionalized elderly women. The obtained t-value is  $t=8.41$ , which indicates that the obtained result is significant at 0.01 level and the hypothesis which states that "There is a significant difference between Level of Stress among Institutionalized and Non institutionalized elderly women" is accepted .

The obtained mean scores indicate that Institutionalized elderly women show higher level of stress when compared to non institutionalized elderly women. The probable reasons may be loneliness and feeling of worthlessness, as they are away from the family and loved ones. Economic condition is also another factor which

forces them to depend on others. Most of the elderly in the present study come from a lower economic status with poor education background which is probably another cause for their stressful life.

The stress level of non institutionalized women is comparatively very low. This may be attributed to the fact that they have an active family life, with their loved ones around them offering support and security mentally and financially.

### CONCLUSION:

The obtained results conclude that "There is a significant difference between level of stress among Institutionalized elderly women and Non-institutionalized elderly women".

### IMPLICATIONS:

Based on the study, we can arrive at implications that

1. Stressors are the main factors for the institutionalized elderly women to experience a stressful life. To name a few, conflicts in the family, feeling of insecurity, frustration with the present financial condition and fear of death.
2. Peer association, participation in the institution's day to day activities, reading and music etc. are probable replacements that will help them cope their stress.
3. Government or the institution itself can arrange stress buster programmers like Pranayama (breathing technique), yoga, music therapy, laughter therapy etc.
4. Though non institutionalized women experience certain amount of stress, it does not affect their overall well being. Productive activity in the family helps invoke positive attitude, keeping them content and complacent.

### LIMITATIONS:

1. The study was limited to the sample of elderly women participants.
2. The study was mainly based on standardized questionnaire and interview method; instead it could have elaborated to intervention study.
3. The study didn't strictly consider the factors such as a cultural background, socio-economic status, and geographical area which majorly influences the lifestyle and health of an individual which in turn influence the generality of the study.

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