

The Correlation of Social Support with the Quality of Life of the Elderly

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Abstract: The low quality of life of the elderly is often associated with the function of the family and the social support they receive, which can come from a partner, family, or community. As many as 70% of the elderly experience a decrease in quality of life, especially feelings of isolation and lack of attention from other family members. Objective: To determine the correlation between social support and the quality of life of the elderly. This study used a correlation methodology with a cross-sectional design. The population in this study was all respondents in RT 035 Batam city Sub-district, Batam City, with a total of 45 elderly in March-April 2025. The sampling technique used was total sampling. Instruments used: SSQ-6 and WHOQOL-BREF. The findings indicated that, according to the frequency distribution of social support, the majority of social support was moderate for as many as twenty people (44.4%). In contrast, the frequency of quality of life was moderate for as many as twenty-two people (48.9%). After completing the data analysis, the p-value was determined to be 0.004. The conclusion indicates a significant connection between the presence of social support and the quality of life experienced by elderly individuals.

Keywords: Elderly, Quality of Life, Social Support

1. Introduction

The elderly is a natural stage of development that every person who reaches old age will experience at some point in their lives. It is an unavoidable fact that cannot be avoided. Those who are considered to be elderly are a group of individuals who are going through a progressive process of change that is associated with a decline in their capacity to live and a reduction in their sensitivity. One who has reached the ultimate stage of the aging process is referred to as the elderly (Escourrou et al., 2022).

The growing number of senior people in the population, in conjunction with the growing number of challenges that elderly people face, also affects the decline in the quality of life of elderly people. (Ismail et al., 2021) This decline can be attributed to several factors, including diminished mental capacity, shifts in social roles, senility, and depression. (Abdi et al., 2020) 70% of older people face a decline in their quality of life, particularly in feelings of isolation and a lack of attention from other family members. The low quality of life of elderly people is frequently linked to the functioning of their families and the social support they receive, which can come from their spouses, their families, or their communities (Boamah et al., 2021).

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Quality of life, as defined by the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL), refers to an individual's view of their overall well-being and satisfaction with life. It encompasses various aspects such as personal objectives, desires, standards, and compassion, and is influenced by the individual's interactions within their community, cultural context, and societal systems (Antoniadou et al., 2023). The concept of quality of life encompasses several areas that individuals analyze to determine the overall Goodness of their lives. This includes evaluating their emotional reactions to events, general disposition, life satisfaction, employment satisfaction, and personal relationships (Bakhouché, 2019).

Many individuals aspire to achieve a high standard of living, but variations in personal characteristics and the challenges they encounter can impact this goal (Susanti, 2023). Individuals with an excellent quality of life demonstrate that they have effectively reached the integrity phase, the ultimate stage of their life. This indicates that the elderly person has successfully fulfilled their obligations in their interactions with themselves and others (Ayoubi-Mahani et al., 2023). Similarly, a diminished quality of life directly affects the despair older individuals feel (Lim & Chang, 2020). The elderly can experience happiness through various means, such as maintaining close relationships with family members, receiving assistance from caring individuals in their social circle, engaging in regular hobbies or activities, and other similar avenues. The elderly require social support due to these factors (Beygi et al., 2023).

The numerous challenges the elderly encounter can impact their quality of life and necessitate assistance from others in their vicinity, considering the restrictions inherent in old age (Ghența et al., 2022). This assistance is provided through social support, which can be obtained from family, life partners, or community groups (Van Leeuwen et al., 2019). Social support refers to providing attention, emotional comfort, and practical aid by individuals or groups, which fosters a sense of being cared for, esteemed, and cherished (Jesudoss et al., 2023). Social support refers to how individuals perceive the presence of supportive resources that help mitigate symptoms and alleviate the impact of stressful events (Susanti et al., 2022). Social support refers to the presence, willingness, and concern of dependable people who value us and have affection for us (Ati et al., 2018). The purpose of this study was to determine the correlation between social support and the quality of life of the elderly.

2. Research Method

This research employs a correlation methodology with a cross-sectional design. The study was conducted at RT 035 Batam City District, Batam City, from March to April 2025. The population for this study consisted of all the respondents residing in the RT 035 region of Batam City District, with a total of 45 elderly. The sampling technique employed was total sampling, which involved sampling the entire population of 45

individuals. The SSQ-6 questionnaire was used to assess social support characteristics (Sarason, 1983), while the WHOQOL-BREF (The WHOQOL Group, 1998) questionnaire was employed to measure quality of life. The Spearman's rho coefficient was utilized to analyze the data.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1 Result

Table 1. Distribution of The Number of Respondents' Characteristics

Characteristic	f (%)
Gender	
Male	21 (46,7 %)
Female	24 (53,3%)
Age	
41-50	20 (44,4%)
51-60	13 (28,9%)
61-70	12 (26,7%)
Education	
Elementary	6 (13,3%)
Junior High	3 (6,7%)
High School	11 (24,4%)
Bachelor	25 (55,6%)

Table 1 indicates that the majority of respondents are below the age of 50, with a higher proportion of females. Additionally, most respondents had a bachelor.

Table 2. Distribution of The Amount of Social Support

Social Support	Frequency
Medium	20 (44.4%)
High	10 (22.2%)
Very High	15 (33.3%)

The collected results are presented in Table 2, and it is clear that most of the 45 respondents received moderate social support, which was 20 people (44.4% of the total). In contrast, a high minority of 10 people (22.2%) received high social support.

Table 3. Distribution of Quality of Life of the Elderly

Quality of Life	Frequency
Less	11 (24,4%)
Medium	22 (48,9%)
Good	12 (26,7%)

According to the data in Table 3, it can be observed that out of the 45 respondents, the majority, 22 individuals (48.9%), have a moderate quality of life. In contrast, 11 individuals (24.4%) have a lower quality of life.

Table 4. Correlation between Social Support and Quality of Life of the Elderly

	Social Support				<i>p-value</i>
	Very High	High	Medium	Total	
Quality of Life					
Good	8 (17,8%)	6 (13,3%)	1 (2,2%)	15 (33.3%)	0,004
Medium	0 (0%)	8 (17,8%)	2 (4,4%)	10 (22,2%)	
Less	4 (4%)	8 (12%)	8 (4%)	20 (44,4%)	

p-value is obtained from Spearman's rho

Based on the examination results in Table 4, out of the 45 respondents who had hypertension, the social assistance factor and personal satisfaction showed a Spearman's rho correlation of 0,004. Hence, a robust correlation exists between the quality of life and social support.

3.2 Discussion

Psychological issues in older adults are an inevitable part of the aging process, affecting all seniors. Older individuals may undergo psychological alterations, including short-term memory impairment, frustration, feelings of isolation, apprehension about losing independence, dread of mortality, shifts in motivation, sadness, and anxiety (Kang & Kim, 2022). The transition from one position to another in the social context, the loss of a loved one, changes in physiological state, and death are the most common causes of psychological issues among the elderly. The elderly will gradually withdraw from their relationships with the community around them as a result of the psychological changes that they encounter, which will impact their ability to interact with others. Reducing the amount of social interaction that older people have can lead to feelings of loneliness. As a result, elderly people may opt to spend more time alone, which can lead to feelings of isolation and, eventually, depression. This can hurt the quality of life of elderly people (Hasugian et al., 2021).

A high-quality life for the elderly is an optimal functioning situation, so they can enjoy their old age with satisfaction and support from their social circle. There is a strong correlation between happiness, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being, all associated with one another, and a high quality of life in the aged population (Rekawati et al., 2022). Another factor related to a high quality of life is the presence of a pleasant environment, the individual's age, and their overall health, all of which are considered components of quality of life. There is a correlation between the elderly's awareness of health problems and the appropriate healthy living behaviors that they engage in, which directly affects the quality of life that they experience (Wong et al., 2018).

It is possible to understand the quality of life as the degree to which an individual is satisfied with their life, which can be determined by their physical, psychological, and social living circumstances. World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) defines quality of life as the perception of individuals with their lives in society within the

context of existing cultures and value systems connected to objectives, expectations, standards, and concerns. This definition states that quality of life measures individuals' feelings about their lives. According to Wong et al, quality of life is a broad notion influenced by various factors, including an individual's level of independence, psychological state, level of physical conditions, and individual relationships with external environments. When it comes to the elderly, quality of life is quite important. If they have a high quality of life, they will be able to make their life in old age more serene and will be able to have a wealthy old age.

Rekawati et al indicate that the quality of life of the elderly can be optimal if all of the functional conditions of the elderly can be met in high or maximum conditions with the provision of good social support. This will allow the elderly to enjoy their old age in a way that is both happy and meaningful, thereby setting the stage for a high quality of life for the elderly. In addition, the quality of life of the old can be affected by several factors, including sociodemographic features, the elderly's ability to deal with stress, and the elderly's ability to cope with stress. To ensure that the needs of the elderly are adequately met, quality of life is a criterion that must be in place (Kim & Hwang, 2022). As a result, the fulfillment of welfare and the provision of social assistance are quite good, which significantly impacts the quality of life that the elderly experience. Social support is the presence of other people who can be relied upon to offer assistance, encouragement, acceptance, and attention. Therefore, social support can enhance an individual's well-being or quality of life (Kupferberg & Hasler, 2023).

Caregiving experiences, including positive and negative caregiving experiences and chronic stress, strongly impact the quality of life. Both the economic resources and the available social resources directly influence the quality of life (Cejalvo et al., 2021). Regarding quality of life, four areas are highly significant: health and functionality, socioeconomic condition, psychological well-being, spirituality, and family. The health and functioning domain includes a variety of factors, including the ability to be helpful to other people and to be physically independent (Michaelson et al., 2019). The socioeconomic domain is concerned with living standards, neighborhood conditions, friends, and other related topics (Guerra-Martín et al., 2023). A variety of factors fall within the psychological and spiritual sphere, such as happiness, mental tranquility, and control over one's life. The family domain encompasses the happiness of the family, the children, the spouse, and the family's health. The four domains cover most of the aspects deemed vital for quality of life, even though it is difficult to exhaust all of the elements of life by themselves (Guerra-Martín et al., 2023).

A study conducted by Vaingankar et al indicates that when individuals receive social support, they can cultivate feelings of value and have positive attitudes about themselves, which ultimately contributes to enhancing their mental well-being. Based on the theoretical foundation, we present a hypothesis stating a direct correlation between

social support and the quality of life in older adults. There is a positive correlation between the level of social support and the quality of life. In contrast, a decrease in social support is associated with a reduction in the overall quality of life (Foy et al., 2019).

4. Conclusion And Suggestions

This study shows that there is a significant relationship between social support and the quality of life of the elderly in RT 035 Batam City Subdistrict. The majority of respondents in this study obtained a moderate level of social support and had a moderate quality of life. This finding is reinforced by the p-value of 0.004, which indicates a significant positive correlation between the level of social support and quality of life. Thus, the higher the social support received by the elderly, the better the quality of life they feel. Social support plays a vital role in maintaining the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the elderly, as well as being a protective factor against feelings of loneliness and social isolation that are often experienced in old age.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that families, communities, and health workers be more active in providing attention and support to the elderly in the form of emotional, instrumental, and social support. Local governments and related agencies are also expected to develop empowerment programs and elderly services that encourage social interaction, such as elderly posyandu, gymnastics groups, and inclusive community activities. Future researchers are advised to conduct research with a larger sample size and cover a wider area, as well as consider other factors such as economic status, health conditions, and access to health services about the quality of life of the elderly.

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