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Original Article

The level and influencing factors of gerotranscendence in community-dwelling older adults



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To study the level and influencing factors of gerotranscendence in community-dwelling older adults.

Methods: We investigated 772 community-dwelling older adults in Hengyang in the Hunan Province of the People's Republic of China using a translated Gerotranscendence Scale and demographic information.

Results: The community-dwelling older adults had an overall intermediate level of gerotranscendence. One-way analysis of variance and multiple linear regression analysis showed that sex, living arrangements, regular activities, and religious affiliation influenced the gerotranscendence perspective of the community-dwelling older adults ($p < 0.05$), but that living arrangement and gerotranscendence perspective were not significantly correlated. The covariates clarified about 38.8% of the variation in gerotranscendence perspective. **Conclusions:** Our findings suggest that sex, regular activities, religious affiliation, and living arrangement influence gerotranscendence. These findings can guide the planning and implementation of better practices in elderly care by nurses and other healthcare professionals.

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1. Introduction

The aging population has become a challenge for the developed and developing countries [1]. According to the findings of the 2010 national census [2], the People's Republic of China has

entered the new stage of an aging society, where people aged ≥ 60 years, of which 66.9% are aged ≥ 65 years, account for about 13.26% of the total population. Indeed, "the greying of China" has influenced health insurance policies. In the United States [3], older adults comprise 13% of the population, and it is predicted to change markedly by 2030. Given the phenomenon of

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global aging, it is unsurprising that the research interest of an increasing number of researchers has focused on studying the physical and mental health of older adults. Gerotranscendence is considered the final stage of a natural progression of achieving maturity and wisdom [4]. The prefix “gero” means ageing, and “transcendence” refers to the capacity to exceed the limitations and restrictions encountered in life; it is also associated with the existence of God [5]. The concept of gerotranscendence leads to community-dwelling older adults changing their initially negative attitude towards aging, guiding them to face it with a positive attitude. We aimed to study the level and influencing factors of gerotranscendence in community-dwelling older adults and to guide the planning and implementation of better practices in elderly care by nurses and other healthcare professionals.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Subjects

We investigated community-dwelling older adults in a community in Hengyang, Hunan Province, the People's Republic of China, between October 2013 and April 2014. The inclusion criteria were: (1) age ≥ 60 years; (2) able to communicate in Chinese; (3) cognitive function could be measured using the Small Portable Mental Status Questionnaire (SPMSQ; total score = 10, normal ≥ 8) [6].

2.2. Instruments

The study participants completed questionnaires regarding demographic information and a Gerotranscendence Scale with the help of five postgraduates who had been trained systematically by a community nursing expert. Participants who were unable to fill out the questionnaires had the possible answers read to them, and their oral answers were recorded. All community-dwelling older adults recruited to this study provided written consent; we obtained ethical approval from the Nursing Institute of University of South China Institutional Review Board.

2.2.1. Demographic information

The first part of the questionnaire referred to demographic information, including sex, age, education, marital status, living arrangement, income, chronic diseases, regular activities (≥ 30 min/session, ≥ 3 times/week), and religious affiliation.

2.2.2. Gerotranscendence Scale

The Gerotranscendence Scale is a 10-item scale developed by Tornstam [7] and translated into Chinese by Li et al. [8]. It is designed to measure the gerotranscendence perspective of older adults. It encompasses three dimensions: cosmic transcendence, coherence, and solitude. The Gerotranscendence Scale is a four-point Likert scale, where “never”, “rarely”, “sometimes”, and “usually” are scored 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. Scores range 10–40 points; higher scores indicate higher gerotranscendence perspective. Its content validity index (CVI) [9] was 0.90, indicating that the CVI was appropriate. In this study, the overall Cronbach's α of internal consistency reliability of the scale was 0.801.

2.3. Data analysis

Data were analysed using t test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlation and multiple linear regression analyses via SPSS 13.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Data are presented as the mean \pm standard deviation, and $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

3. Results

We distributed 850 questionnaires; 813 questionnaires were returned, of which 772 were deemed valid. Thus, the recovery rate was 95.65% and the validity rate of the returned questionnaires was 94.96%.

3.1. Overall mean gerotranscendence scores

The scores for the three dimensions of gerotranscendence (cosmic transcendence, coherence, solitude) were 2.71 ± 0.56 , 2.14 ± 0.59 , and 2.30 ± 0.65 , respectively. The total mean gerotranscendence score was 2.39 ± 0.46 (Table 1).

3.2. One-way ANOVA

One-way ANOVA and the t test revealed that sex, living arrangement, regular activities, and religious affiliation significantly affected gerotranscendence perspective ($p < 0.05$, Table 2), but age, education, marital status, income, and chronic diseases did not.

3.3. Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis showed that gerotranscendence perspective was significantly associated with sex, regular activities, and religious affiliation, and was not associated with living arrangement. However, the one-way ANOVA indicated that living arrangement influenced gerotranscendence significantly (Table 3).

3.4. Multiple linear regression analysis

The gerotranscendence score was used as a dependent variable against sex (male = 1, female = 0), regular activities (yes = 1, no = 0), religious affiliation (yes = 1, no = 0), and living arrangement (alone = 0, only with spouse = 1, with generations = 2, other = 3). Gerotranscendence was significantly related to sex, regular activities, and religious affiliation living arrangement ($p < 0.05$, Table 4). The covariates clarified about 38.8% of the variation in gerotranscendence perspective.

4. Discussion

4.1. Community-dwelling older adults had intermediate gerotranscendence scores

The total mean gerotranscendence score was < 3.00 , which was concordant with other research [10]. The result indicated that most community-dwelling older adults could not

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