

Assessment Of Adjustment Problems In Old Age Population

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Abstract

Background:

Increased geriatric population means an increase in the incidences of age-related physical, psychological, and social problems that very often force an elderly individual to have to adjust to new conditions. Physiotherapists serve a vital role as primary contact practitioners by recognizing and then treating these problems through evaluation and intervention. Hence, this study looks at adjustment problems among the elderly from a physiotherapy point of view, using functional mobility, balance, pain, independence for activities of daily living (ADLs), and psychosocial well-being as screening tools. If adjustment problems are identified very early, then treatment is offered in time, thus rendering the benefits-either the better quality of life, prevention of falls, or overall positive welfare-for the aging population.

Methods:

This article studies the adjustment problems in old age populations. One hundred participants were enrolled in this cross-sectional study, and data were collected using the Shamshad Jasbir old age adjustment inventory scale. The process of obtaining an informed consent of the participants and institutional review board (IRB) approval was ensured.

Result

The questionnaire was targeted toward the assessment of adjustment issues among the old age population. Overall the questionnaire consisted of 125 questions. The respondents sent back their responses through Google forms. The data thus collected were analyzed by a statistician with the help of a statistical package, Instat. The chi-square test was used to analyze the question. The chief areas reported to be affected were health (68%) and emotional adjustment (63%).

Conclusion:

In assessing adjustment problems among the elderly in a sample of 100 persons, using the old age adjustment inventory (OAAI), significant problems have been brought forth mainly in the health, emotional, and social areas. These coincide with the literature, which stresses the multifaceted nature of aging-related adjustments.

KeyWords: Adjustment problems, old age population

INTRODUCTION :

The global population is aging at an unprecedented rate, a demographic shift that brings both opportunities and challenges. According to the United Nations' World Population Prospects 2024, by 2050, one in six people worldwide will be over the age of 65, totaling approximately 1.5 billion individuals, up from one in 11 in 2019. This introduction lays the groundwork for a detailed exploration of physiotherapy's role in assessing adjustment problems in the old age population. As the global population ages, with projections indicating 1.5 billion people over 65 by 2050, the need for effective assessment and intervention strategies will only grow [1]. The aging of the global population is a universal trend, with significant implications for individuals, families, and societies. The World Health Organization projects that by 2030, the number of people aged 60 and older will rise from 1.1 billion in 2023 to 1.4 billion, with the most rapid growth occurring in developing regions where 80% of older adults are expected to reside by 2050. This transformation, fueled by a global life expectancy increase to 73.3 years as of 2024 an 8.4-year rise since 1995 and declining fertility rates, underscores the urgency of addressing the needs of older adults[2]. Among these needs, adjustment problems difficulties in adapting to the physical, psychological, and social changes of aging stand out as a critical concern [3]. Physiotherapy, traditionally focused on physical rehabilitation, is increasingly recognized as a vital discipline for assessing and managing these multifaceted challenges. Physiotherapy's role in assessing adjustment problems extends beyond its traditional focus on physical rehabilitation to encompass a holistic evaluation of how physical impairments affect overall well-being. Physiotherapists use standardized tools like

the Barthel Index, which measures functional independence in activities of daily living, or the Rivermead Mobility Index, which assesses mobility levels, to quantify physical limitations [4]. By evaluating not only physical impairments but also their interplay with psychosocial factors, physiotherapists can play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life for the elderly, fostering resilience, and supporting adaptation to later life. Physical Therapy: Impact on Psychosocial Well-Being of Older People emphasizes that physical interventions, such as exercise programs, can improve not only mobility but also mood and social engagement, directly supporting adjustment [5]. Aging is an inevitable process that introduces a cascade of changes, often testing older adults' ability to adjust to their evolving circumstances. Current methodologies for physiotherapy assessment of adjustment problems include the Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA), a multidimensional tool that integrates physical, psychological, and social evaluations [6].

Physical decline, such as reduced mobility or chronic pain, can lead to psychological distress and social isolation, creating a vicious cycle that hinders well-being. Research suggests that adjustment problems are interconnected, with physical decline often serving as the catalyst for psychological and social challenges. For instance, a study in *The Journals of Gerontology: Series A* found that poor physical function significantly impacts psychological well-being, creating a feedback loop that hinders adaptation [7]. The World Health Organization's World Report on Ageing and Health emphasizes that healthy aging involves maintaining functional ability and well-being, goals that physiotherapy can directly support through targeted assessments and interventions. Early intervention can prevent these outcomes, reducing healthcare costs and improving quality of life. Second, it supports personalized care plans that address individual needs, aligning with the WHO's healthy aging framework, which prioritizes maintaining functional ability. By addressing the complex interplay of aging-related challenges, physiotherapists can help older adults adapt to their circumstances, ensuring that longer lives are also healthier and more fulfilling [8]. The importance, methods, difficulties, and crucial role of interdisciplinary collaboration in the physiotherapy assessment of adjustment issues in the elderly population are all covered in this paper. It seeks to demonstrate how physiotherapy fills the gap between physical rehabilitation and holistic care, providing a basis for comprehending this developing field. It is based on current research and international statistics. There are advantages and disadvantages to this demographic shift. Although longer lifespans enable greater engagement and productivity, they also raise the incidence of dependency, frailty, and chronic illnesses. According to *The Global Population Aging: Facts, Challenges, Solutions & Perspectives*, the main societal effects include changing disease burdens, growing healthcare expenses, and possible labor shortages.. The Global Population Aging report notes that in low-income countries, healthcare infrastructure may struggle to keep pace with aging populations, straining physiotherapy resources [9]. Future research should focus on developing standardized, culturally sensitive tools, enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration, and exploring scalable solutions like tele-rehabilitation to reach underserved populations. Innovative solutions, such as tele-rehabilitation, offer potential but require further development and validation. Adjustment problems in the elderly encompass a broad spectrum of difficulties in adapting to aging-related changes. Physically, these may include reduced mobility, chronic pain, or conditions like osteoporosis, which restrict independence. Training physiotherapists to conduct psychosocial assessments also remains a hurdle, as does access to services in resource-poor settings. This shift is driven by advancements in healthcare, nutrition, and living conditions, which have extended life expectancy, alongside a decline in fertility rates, with over 60% of the world now living in countries below the replacement rate of 2.1 live births per woman [10]. For individuals, the physical realities of aging such as arthritis, reduced muscle strength, or impaired balance can limit daily activities, while psychological stressors like retirement or loss of loved ones compound these difficulties [11]. Socially, older adults may face isolation as mobility declines, reducing their ability to maintain connections [12]. For example, a patient with limited mobility due to osteoarthritis might struggle to leave their home, leading to social withdrawal and depression—issues a physiotherapist can identify and address. Within this context, adjustment problems emerge as a critical issue, requiring innovative approaches to assessment and intervention, with physiotherapy positioned as a key player. Physiotherapy, with its ability to address physical, psychological, and social dimensions, is uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between rehabilitation and holistic care [13]. Future research should focus on

developing standardized, culturally sensitive tools, enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration, and exploring scalable solutions like tele-rehabilitation to reach underserved populations. Innovative solutions, such as tele-rehabilitation, offer potential but require further development and validation [14]. Adjustment problems in the elderly encompass a broad spectrum of difficulties in adapting to aging-related changes. Physically, these may include reduced mobility, chronic pain, or conditions like osteoporosis, which restrict independence. Training physiotherapists to conduct psychosocial assessments also remains a hurdle, as does access to services in resource-constrained settings [15]. The National Institute on Aging's Global Aging research underscores that these problems are not isolated but are influenced by broader factors such as access to healthcare, housing, and economic resources, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where resources are often scarce. Psychologically, physical limitations can trigger anxiety, depression, or a loss of identity, particularly when coupled with significant life transitions [16]. Socially, the inability to engage in community activities or maintain relationships can lead to isolation, further exacerbating adjustment difficulties. For instance, while a physiotherapist might improve a patient's mobility, a social worker could facilitate community reintegration, amplifying the impact of the intervention [17]. Despite these advancements, challenges persist. The lack of culturally sensitive tools limits their applicability across diverse populations, particularly in developing regions. This complexity highlights the need for a holistic assessment approach, one that physiotherapy is uniquely equipped to provide by addressing both the root causes and broader implications of these issues [18]. These tools provide objective data that can reveal how physical decline contributes to adjustment difficulties [19]. Beyond physical assessments, physiotherapy increasingly incorporates psychosocial evaluations. Tools like the Geriatric Depression Scale can screen for psychological distress, while clinical observations might note social isolation patterns. Psychosocial assessments, though less standardized, may involve questionnaires or interviews to gauge mental health and social participation [20]. This dual focus positions physiotherapy as a bridge between physical health and psychosocial well-being, offering a comprehensive approach to assessment that informs tailored interventions. The evidence suggests that physiotherapy not only assesses physical decline but also its broader impact on adjustment, offering a pathway to resilience and well-being in later life [21]. An unexpected yet critical aspect of this role is interdisciplinary collaboration. Physiotherapists often work alongside psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists to address the multifaceted nature of adjustment problems [22]. This collaborative model is essential for ensuring that assessments capture the full scope of an older adult's challenges and needs [23]. The CGA provides a framework for quantifying adjustment difficulties and tailoring interventions [24]. Other tools, such as the Timed Up and Go Test or the Short Physical Performance Battery, assess mobility and balance, offering insights into physical barriers to adjustment [25]. The Visual Capitalist visualization, *Charted: The World's Aging Population from 1950-2100*, depicts this trend, noting that countries such as Japan already have 30% of their population over 65 as of 2022, with that figure expected to rise to 24% globally by 2100. The rapid rate of population aging makes this assessment even more important. In countries like Japan, where the elderly already make up a sizable proportion of the population, and in developing countries with limited resources, physiotherapy assessments can help prioritize interventions that maximize independence and well-being [26]. Assessing adjustment issues through physiotherapy is critical for several reasons. First, it allows for early detection of issues that may lead to further decline, such as frailty or institutionalization [27]. Third, it reveals unexpected connections, such as how improving physical function can reduce social isolation and improve overall adjustment [28]. Physiotherapists contribute to a proactive approach to aging by identifying adjustment barriers, whether physical, psychological, or social. This ensures that older adults can adapt to their circumstances with dignity and support [29].

Table: Key Statistics on Global Aging Population

Year	2022	2050	2100
Population Aged 65+ (Millions)	771	~1,552	~2,328

Percentage of Global Population	10%	16%	24%
Source	Visual Capitalist (2022)	United Nations (2024)	Visual Capitalist (2022)

METHOD:

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 elderly people. The study was conducted by sending Google forms via various social media platforms. The Shamshad Jasbir old age adjustment inventory scale was used to evaluate adjustment problems in the elderly population. A case sheet was created, which included the name, age, and gender. The study lasted 6 months. Due to time constraints, the random sampling method was used. The collected data was analyzed by a statistician using the instat application. The questions were analyzed using a chi-square test.

Inclusion criteria:

The study was conducted on an elderly population over the age of 60. The forms were distributed to those who agreed to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria:

Individuals with any neurological condition, psychological issues, or any other condition that impairs cognition and decision-making were excluded from the study.

Ethical committee approval:

The study was approved by the institutional ethical committee of Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth (deemed to be a university) in Karad. Respondents were given an explanation of the study and forms, and they provided informed consent. All respondents volunteered to participate, and their confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

RESULTS

The questionnaire was used to assess adjustment problems in the elderly population. There were in total 125 questions. The response was obtained by submitting Google Forms. A statistician analyzed the collected data using an instat application. The questions were analyzed using the chi-square test.

1. Distribution of data according to age group

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
60-69 yrs	42	42%
70-79 yrs	39	39%
Above 80 yrs	19	19%

2. Distribution of data according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%

3. Distribution of data according to adjustments scores of domain

Domain	Frequency	Percentage
Health adjustment	68	68%
Home environment	45	45%
Social adjustment	58	58%
Emotional adjustment	63	63%
Financial adjustment	50	50%
Religious adjustment	25	25%

4. Distribution of data according to overall adjustment level (based on OAAI total score)

Adjustment level	Frequency	Percentage
Good Adjustment	22	22%
Moderate Adjustment	54	54%
Poor Adjustment	24	24%

Interpretation

1. Age Distribution.

The majority of participants (42% were between the ages of 60 and 69), followed by the 70 and 79 age groups (39%), and a smaller proportion were over the age of 80. This age distribution reflects a balanced representation of the elderly population and emphasizes the importance of age-specific therapeutic strategies in physiotherapy, particularly since the level of adjustment challenges may vary with increasing age due to functional decline and comorbidities

2. Gender Distribution

The sample was composed of 55% males and 45% females, indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution. Gender-based differences in adjustment patterns should be considered in clinical settings, as previous research suggests that women may report greater emotional adjustment difficulties, whereas men may struggle more with social and health-related adjustments—factors important for personalised physiotherapy planning

3. Domain-wise Adjustment Issues

Analysis of adjustment domains revealed that:

- The majority of issues (68%), pertaining to health adjustment, highlighted the necessity of strong physiotherapeutic management of mobility, pain, chronic conditions, and general physical functioning.
 - Notably, 63% of respondents had emotional adjustment problems, indicating a strong correlation between older adults' physical and mental health. Physiotherapists ought to understand the psychological background and take into account integrative methods that incorporate patient motivation and stress management. 58% of participants reported having trouble adjusting to social situations, which may have an impact on their involvement in group therapy and rehabilitation programs. Recovery and treatment adherence may be hampered by social isolation.
- Home Environment (45%) and Financial Adjustment (50%) scores indicate that environmental and economic constraints may be significant barriers to ongoing therapy or home exercise compliance.
 - Although it was the least impacted domain (25%), religious adjustment is still important for comprehending patients' values and coping strategies, which can be used to encourage behavioral change in physiotherapy.

4. Levels of Total Adjustment

Based on the Older Adults Adjustment Inventory (OAAI) results:

- 54% of participants demonstrated a moderate adjustment, suggesting that targeted support could help them prevent further decline.
- Only 22% showed good adjustment, highlighting the need for preventative and proactive physiotherapy services in the elderly population; 24% showed poor adjustment, indicating a vulnerable population that requires interdisciplinary care that includes social, psychological, and physical support networks.

DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Physiotherapy-Related Adjustment Issues in the Elderly Population. Elderly people frequently experience adjustment issues as a result of the major physical, psychological, and social changes that come with aging. Their quality of life may be greatly impacted by these difficulties, which include diminished mobility, persistent pain, social isolation, and deteriorating mental health. By improving physical function, reducing pain, and promoting psychological well-being, physiotherapy is an essential therapeutic intervention

in addressing these adjustment problems. The assessment of adjustment issues in older adults and the function of physical therapy in easing these difficulties are examined in this article.

Elderly adjustment issues frequently show up as challenges adjusting to age-related changes, such as diminished physical ability, loss of independence, or chronic conditions like osteoporosis, arthritis, or stroke-related impairments. Functional limitations, increased dependency, and emotional distress, such as anxiety or depression, can result from these problems. These issues are made worse by social factors like the death of a loved one or a decline in social interaction. Physical, psychological, and social aspects must all be taken into account when evaluating these difficulties. Mobility, mental health, and fall risk are frequently assessed using instruments such as the Functional Independence Measure (FIM) and the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS). A comprehensive grasp of their needs is also provided by qualitative evaluations, such as patient interviews, which assist in identifying subjective experiences of adjustment difficulties. By enhancing physical function and building resilience, physiotherapy is in a unique position to address these adjustment issues. For example, customized fitness regimens that incorporate strength training, balance drills, and flexibility exercises can improve mobility and lower the risk of falls, which are a big worry for senior citizens. According to a 2023 study in the *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy*, 78% of senior participants with mobility problems experienced an improvement in their functional outcomes as a result of structured physiotherapy interventions. Chronic condition pain can also be reduced with pain management techniques like hydrotherapy or manual therapy, allowing older adults to participate more fully in everyday activities. Increased independence raises self-esteem and lessens feelings of powerlessness, so these physical gains frequently have psychological advantages as well. Additionally, physiotherapy fosters mental health and social interaction. In order to combat loneliness and promote a sense of community, group-based physiotherapy sessions offer social interaction opportunities. Cognitive exercise programs, like dual-task training, which combines mental and physical tasks, have demonstrated promise in enhancing emotional resilience and cognitive function. For instance, a 2024 randomized controlled trial published in *Physiotherapy Research International* showed that over the course of 12 weeks, group exercise programs decreased depressive symptoms in 65% of senior participants. Physiotherapy helps older adults better adapt to changes associated with aging by addressing both physical and psychosocial factors. However, customized evaluation and intervention are necessary for successful physiotherapy. To create programs that are both accessible and long-lasting, factors like comorbidities, cognitive impairments, or socioeconomic barriers must be taken into account. Because adjustment issues are complex, working with interdisciplinary teams that include social workers, occupational therapists, and psychologists improves results. In summary, standardized instruments and qualitative techniques are used to evaluate social, psychological, and physical difficulties in the elderly population in order to assess adjustment issues. Physiotherapy is a fundamental intervention that promotes mental and social well-being, reduces pain, and increases mobility. Physiotherapy helps older adults deal with the difficulties of aging by treating these problems holistically, improving their quality of life and encouraging a smooth transition.

CONCLUSION

Significant difficulties have been identified, especially in the social, emotional, and health domains, when the old age adjustment inventory (OAAI) was used to assess adjustment problems in a sample of 100 people. These results are in line with previous research that highlights the complexity of aging-related adaptations. According to a noteworthy study done in Gwalior, India, older people who lived in old age homes had more adjustment issues than those who lived in other types of housing. Additionally, studies show that resilience is essential for adjusting to losses and changes associated with aging. It has been demonstrated that creating resilience scales specifically for the elderly population improves health and well-being by evaluating each person's capacity for adaptation. These revelations highlight the significance of all-encompassing geriatric care strategies that take into account environmental, social, and emotional aspects in addition to physical health. Enhancing social support networks and combining physiotherapy with psychosocial interventions can help older adults adjust better and live better lives.

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