

Does Institutionalization Influence Negatively on the Quality of Life of Elders? A Comparative Cross-sectional Study in Galle, Sri Lanka

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In Sri Lanka, the relationship between quality of life (QoL) and the living arrangements of the elderly has not been adequately studied. The aim of this study was to access the QoL of institutionalized and non-institutionalized elders in Galle, Sri Lanka, and to compare the participants' contentment with basic facilities available to them in their residencies between the two groups. A comparative cross-sectional study was conducted with 70 non-institutionalized and 70 institutionalized elders in the Galle District using the convenience sampling method. WHOQoL – BREF (total score and domain scores) were used to measure QoL. Analysis was done using an independent t-test and descriptive statistics. The mean age of the participants was 73.5 years (SD =7.9 years). The institutionalized elders were older and poorer than non-institutionalized elders. The mean total QoL score was higher among non-institutionalized elders compared to institutionalized elders (66.4 verses 59.3, $p < 0.05$) Participants in both groups were highly satisfied (scores ≥ 8 in a 1-10 scale) with toilet, sleeping, religious, and day-to-day personal activity facilities available for them in their residencies. Both groups were moderately satisfied (scores 5 – 7 in a 1-10 scale) with the social interaction facilities available to them. Non-institutionalized elders seem to have a somewhat better QoL than institutionalized elders. Age and poverty may be the decisive factors that contribute to the QoL of elders. For both groups, improvements in social interactions may contribute to enhancing their QoL.

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