








ORIGINAL

Life satisfaction and its relationship with the mental health of older adults in marginal urban areas of Carabayllo

Satisfacción con la vida y su relación con la salud mental de adultos mayores de zonas urbanas marginales de Carabayllo

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ABSTRACT

Life satisfaction among older adults is important for their personal assessment of the quality of their own experiences and for their personal well-being. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine life satisfaction and its relationship with mental health among older adults in marginal urban areas of Carabayllo. This is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study with a population of 270 older adults who responded to a questionnaire on sociodemographic aspects and a life satisfaction scale. The results showed that 54 (20 %) of the older adults were dissatisfied with life, 32 (11,9 %) were slightly dissatisfied, 39 (14,4 %) were neutral regarding life satisfaction, 84 (31,1 %) were satisfied, and 50 (18,5 %) were very satisfied. In conclusion, educational talks should be given to older adults, continuing to promote the experience of positive emotions during this stage of life and allowing them to have greater satisfaction with their lives.

Keywords: Personal Satisfaction; Mental Health; Advanced Age; Social Factors.

RESUMEN

La satisfacción con la vida de las personas mayores es importante para su evaluación personal de la calidad de sus propias experiencias y para su bienestar personal. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este estudio es determinar la satisfacción con la vida y su relación con la salud mental entre las personas mayores de las zonas urbanas marginales de Carabayllo. Se trata de un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo y transversal con una población de 270 personas mayores que respondieron a un cuestionario sobre aspectos sociodemográficos y una escala de satisfacción con la vida. Los resultados mostraron que 54 (20 %) de los adultos mayores estaban insatisfechos con la vida, 32 (11,9 %) estaban ligeramente insatisfechos, 39 (14,4 %) eran neutrales con respecto a la satisfacción con la vida, 84 (31,1 %) estaban satisfechos y 50 (18,5 %) estaban muy satisfechos. En conclusión, se deben impartir charlas educativas a las personas mayores, continuando con la promoción de la experiencia de emociones positivas durante esta etapa de la vida y permitiéndoles tener una mayor satisfacción con sus vidas.

Palabras clave: Satisfacción Personal; Salud Mental; Edad Avanzada; Factores Sociales.

INTRODUCTION

Older adults are considered a group of people who, in the contemporary world, constitute a growing population with special needs related to significant advances in science and technology, especially the promotion of health sciences, where the aging population is a challenge for the world and requires governments to pay more attention to this group.⁽¹⁾ However, it is often difficult to achieve higher levels of life satisfaction as age increases and physical and psychological problems arise.⁽²⁾

Given that the impact of this situation is evident in different spheres of society at the economic, socio-political, cultural, educational, and healthcare levels, as well as in the media, it becomes an opportunity to transform social policies and improve the quality of life of older adults.⁽³⁾

According to the World Health Organization, by 2020, the number of people aged 60 and over will exceed the number of children under five, requiring an increasingly comprehensive approach that addresses all areas of health, including the psychological aspect, which is determined by the life satisfaction perceived by older people.⁽⁴⁾ As a result, older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic have seen their physical and emotional health affected by factors directly associated with the infection, such as increased risk of morbidity and mortality, and by indirect factors such as loneliness, isolation, dependence, violence, discrimination, and lack of access to basic food and health services.⁽⁵⁾

Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to learn about new findings on the variables under study in the adult population in general, which, unlike other life cycles, is exposed to various changes as part of its maturity and independence. Social, family, and work demands and responsibilities begin to increase. Personal, emotional, social, and economic difficulties, parenthood, unemployment, retirement, health problems, the onset of new diseases, and even death are some of these demands.⁽⁶⁾

Defining well-being as the subjective component of quality of life. Life satisfaction represents the cognitive dimension of well-being that results from a balance between expectations and achievements. Happiness constitutes the affective dimension of well-being and is also a subjective indicator of quality of life.⁽⁷⁾ Given that life satisfaction is considered a subjective concept that assesses various areas, including health, psychology, and social aspects of older people's lives, it could be an indispensable part of successful aging.⁽⁸⁾

Social distancing measures sought to contain the spread of infection, prioritizing the prevention and management of COVID-19 cases. Still, other health needs that affected people's quality of life, especially the most vulnerable, were neglected.⁽⁹⁾

In North America, a study conducted in Mexico on 235 older adults found that 53 % reported being highly satisfied, 20 % satisfied, and 9 % slightly happy. This indicates that most patients would not change much if they had to start anew; instead, they expressed the least satisfaction with the statement "in most ways, my life is close to my ideal".⁽¹⁰⁾

In Africa, a study conducted in northeastern Ethiopia on 816 older adults indicated that the level of life satisfaction was: dissatisfied 17,2 %, moderately satisfied 63,8 %, and very satisfied 19,0 %, showing that the level of life satisfaction in our study group was lower than in some more developed countries.⁽¹¹⁾

In Asia, a study conducted in Iran on 679 older adults in the city of Qom revealed that 91,8 % were illiterate and/or had a low level of education, of whom 41,8 % had low life satisfaction, 54,2 % had average life satisfaction, and 4 % had high life satisfaction. Therefore, to increase the level of life satisfaction among older adults, it is suggested to promote social support, health status, and cognitive status.⁽¹²⁾

A study in Ecuador conducted in three provinces with 682 older adults indicated that satisfaction with quality of life was explained by a single factor that accounted for 72,46 % of the total variance, revealing that older adults improve their satisfaction with quality of life as they maintain an adequate perception of their current economic situation, they do not have a poor perception of their health, they attach greater importance to family, and they have a considerable number of resources related to food. This factor explains 68,92 % of their total variance.⁽¹³⁾

In Chile, a study of 101 older adults in southern Chile showed that they are satisfied with their lives, with a higher level of agreement that their lives are close to their ideal in many aspects (70 %), that if they could live their lives again they would not change anything (65 %), their living conditions are excellent (64 %), they are satisfied with their lives (57 %), and so far they have obtained the essential things they have wanted in their lives (56 %).⁽¹⁴⁾

METHOD

Research type and design

According to the characteristics of the research, it is quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional, and non-experimental.⁽¹⁵⁾

Population

The total population consists of 270 residents of the district of Carabayllo.

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants who have lived in the district for more than 1 year
- Participants over 60 years of age
- Participants who agree to participate voluntarily in the study

Technique and Instrument

The data collection technique was a survey, which collected sociodemographic data, and the data collection instrument was the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

The SWLS comprises five items distributed unidimensionally, which are rated on a Likert scale with five response options: “1 = strongly disagree,” “2 = disagree,” “3 = neutral,” “4 = agree,” and “5 = strongly agree,” yielding a score ranging from 5 to 25 points. Therefore, the higher the score, the greater the life satisfaction of older adults in marginal urban areas of Carabayllo.^(16,17)

Place and Application of the Instrument

In order to collect data, coordination with the members of each household was necessary to carry out the study. At the same time, they were provided with information about what was going to be done so that they were aware of the research.

RESULTS

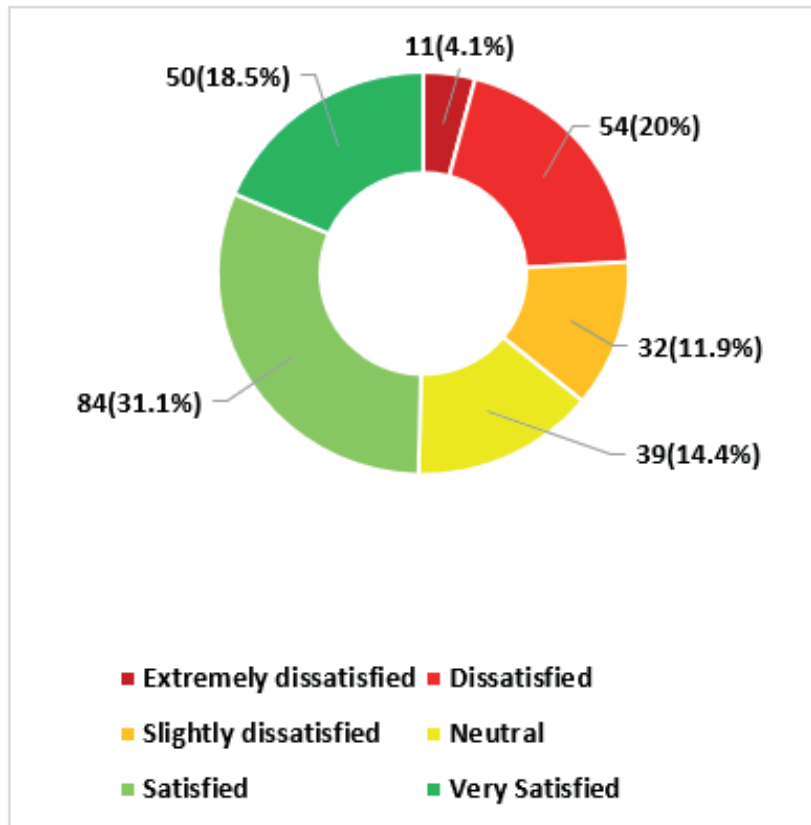


Figure 1. Life satisfaction among residents of marginal urban areas of Carabayllo

Figure 1 shows that 4,1 % (n=11) of participants are extremely dissatisfied with their lives, 20 % (n=54) are dissatisfied with their lives, 11,9 % (n=32) are slightly dissatisfied with their lives, 14,4 % (n=39) are neutral regarding their satisfaction with life, 31,1 % (n=84) are satisfied with their lives, and 18,5 % (n=50) are very satisfied with their lives.

Figure 2 shows that, about gender, 17,2 % (n=32) of males are delighted with life, 25,8 % (n=48) are happy with life, 18,8 % (n=35) are neutral about life satisfaction, 14 % (n=26) are slightly dissatisfied with life, 19,9 % (n=37) are dissatisfied with life, and 4,3 % (n=8) are highly dissatisfied with life. As for females, 21,4 % (n=18) are delighted with life, 4,9 % (n=36) are happy with life, 4,8 % (n=4) are neutral about life satisfaction, 7,1 % (n=6) are slightly dissatisfied with life, 20,2 % (n=17) are dissatisfied with life, and 3,6 % (n=3) are highly dissatisfied with life.

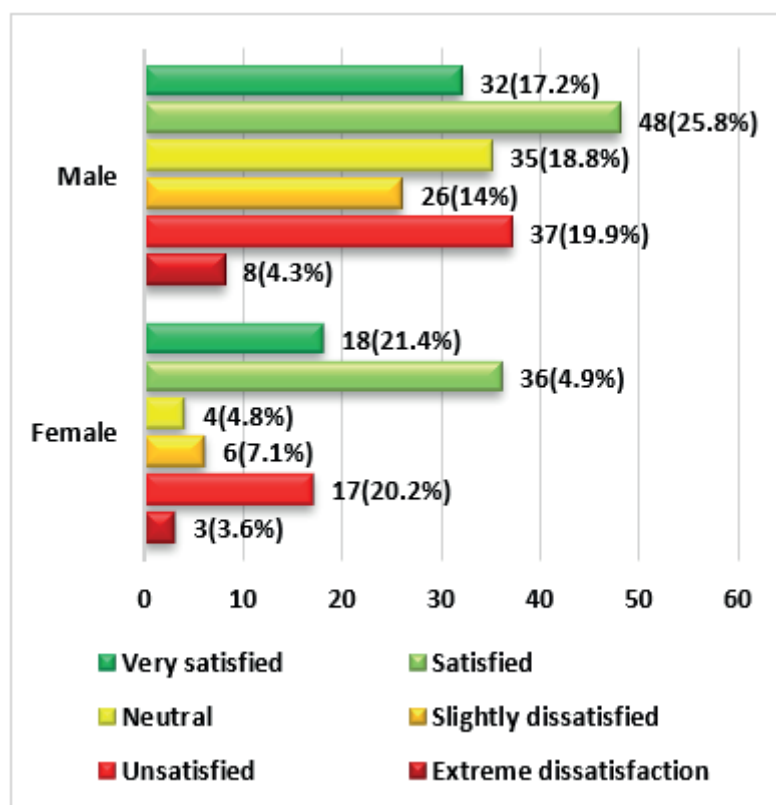


Figure 2. Life satisfaction in relation to gender among residents of marginal urban areas of Carabayllo

DISCUSSION

This study covers the mental health of older adults, given that life satisfaction is one of the factors that determines how older adults feel comfortable with their extrinsic and intrinsic environment.

In terms of life satisfaction, older adults are delighted with their lives. This is because older adults are at peace, tranquil, cared for by their families, and their families are their primary source of emotional support, care, security, and affection, which allows them to have a very satisfying quality of life. Since the mental and social health of older adults will enable them to be independent and autonomous, providing them not only with the ability to meet their own needs, but also to feel comfortable with the life they have led until reaching old age. Therefore, their physical, mental, and social well-being is in complete harmony, given that during all this time, they have managed to overcome adverse effects that prevented them from improving their quality of life.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that educational talks should be given to older adults, promoting the experience of positive emotions during this stage of life that can improve their life satisfaction.

It is concluded that strategies should be implemented to enable older adults to maintain their emotional and social well-being, so that their satisfaction with life is positive.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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