

## TOOL TO ACCESS PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS AMONG THE INDIAN ELDERLY: A NEW SCALE

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### Summary

This scale was developed to study the psychological wellness in Indian elderly aged 60 years and above. Psychological wellness is defined as a multidimensional construct comprising of autonomy, environmental mastery, happiness, life satisfaction, morale, personal growth, positive relationship with others and self acceptance with optimal functioning when these dimensions are in balance. This optimal functioning is a continuous process. The present study intended for the validation and standardization of the tool on 50 Indian elderly couples (n=100). Internal consistency of the scale was determined through Chronbach's Alpha and it was 0.90, quite high and significant at 0.001 level. About content (face & logical) validity of the scale good correspondence was found to exist between the scale results and the considered judgments of expert/experienced observers. Using a more structured method, confirmatory factor analysis present evidence about the measures' convergent and discriminant validity. Ten factors emerged in factor analysis explaining 69.53% of the total variance. Percentile norms were developed for further investigations, interventions and application of the tool on all the 50 Indian elderly couples.

**Keywords:** psychological wellness, Indian elderly couples, Chronbach's alpha, factor analysis, percentilenorms.

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## Introduction

### Conceptual Framework

The main purpose of the study was to develop a scale to access the psychological wellness of elderly aged 60 years and above among the Indian sample.

A shift from the concept of Subjective and Psychological well-being to the field of Positive Psychology is accompanied by focusing our attention to the study of Psychological Wellness. As compared to the earlier concepts subjective wellbeing and mental health, psychological wellness is a newer concept hence little efforts have been made in evaluating how the various psychological dimensions is related to overall wellness, similarly there has been no general agreement among the experts on how to measure the psychological wellness.

An individual's degree of Psychological wellness can be judged on the basis of two independent dimensions viz. positive and negative effects. This view is supported by **Cowen (1994)**, who also believed that wellness is accompanied by hypothetical continuum on one hand and sickness on the other hand. Psychological wellness falls within a broad field of study that examines quality of life issues that share many common characteristic, such as happiness, life satisfaction and morale (**Kozma, Stones & McNeil, 1991**). **Snyder and Lopez (2002)**, however, stated that positive functioning comprises of six dimensions of psychological wellness (self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery and autonomy).

Glancing at the above stated definitions given by various psychologists while developing a tool for measuring the psychological wellness in elderly we carved out eight dimensions which together determine the overall psychological wellness in elderly. These eight dimensions are autonomy, environmental mastery, happiness, life satisfaction, morale, personal growth, positive relationship with others and self acceptance.

### Rationale for the Measure

Keeping in mind the attributes under study, initially a scale of 100 questions was developed. In standardization and validation process only 50 questions survived in the final format of the scale.

In order to control for an agreement response bias, few items were negatively worded. Using a more structured method, a confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the number of wellness facets. Ten factors emerged in the factor analysis. The facets were named after studying the combination of items loading on them. The psychological wellness facets and their brief description are given below:

### Facets of Psychological Wellness Scale

**Locus of Control:** Locus of control has been identified as an important construct of psychological wellness. An individual who is psychologically well has an enduring sense of personal control (Adams et. al., 2000). Witmer and Sweeny (1992) point out that an individual with a sense of inner control is more likely to collect information about disease and health maintenance to enable him or her to improve health habits and implement preventive care. It is based on the social learning theory of Rotter and the attribution theory of Heider (Schepers, 1995).

**Attitude of an individual towards his/her own self:** This is another important construct of psychological wellness which comprises of a number of attributes of an individual such as accessibility of the self to consciousness, correctness of the self concept, feelings about the self concept and the sense of identity.

**Life Satisfaction:** Life satisfaction admits of many definitions. As a first approximation we may define life satisfaction as having a favorable attitude toward one's life as a whole. It also embodies a global judgment about one's life taken as a whole. While for others it is a positive evaluation of the conditions of one's life, a judgment that, at least on balance, it measures up favorably against the standards or expectations.

**Sense of Coherence:** Van Eeden (1996) has indicated sense of coherence as a relevant construct of psychological wellness. Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) contend that a sense of coherence refers to the extent to which one sees the world as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful. Strumpfer (1990) mentions that a sense of coherence develops through repeated experiences of making sense of countless stressors in an individual's life. Through the repeated exposure of

these experiences of sense making a person develops a stronger sense of coherence over time **Strumpfer (1990)**.

**Perception of Reality:** Perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. When people view something with a preconceived idea about it, they tend to take those preconceived ideas and see them whether or not they are there. The extent of a person's knowledge creates their reality as much as the truth, because the human mind can only contemplate that which it has been exposed to. When objects are viewed without understanding, the mind will try to reach for something that it already recognizes, in order to process what it is viewing. That which most closely relates to the unfamiliar from our past experiences, makes up what we see when we look at things that we don't comprehend.

**Intellectual stimulation and Problem Solving:** Another very important construct of psychological wellness is that a healthy person always has the need to know, need to learn, need to organize, is curious and has a sense of wonder. **Van Eeden (1996)** opines that this enables the person to master his or her environment and to resolve problems.

**Integration:** Integration is yet again an important construct of psychological wellness which comprises of balanced psychic forces, a unifying outlook in life and resistance to stress.

**Individual's style of doing work:** It comprises of doing any particular work in one's own style. Every individual is a unique being within oneself thus the style of working also varies from one individual to another. Some tend to be more responsible and seek pleasure while doing any particular work while others might not.

**Personal Growth and Enhancement:** It comprises of motivational processes and the opportunities of an individual to grow at each and every dimension of the growth process. It also helps in enhancing the positive assets and attributes of a person.

**Self Actualization:** **Schulz (1994)** defines self actualization as, "a never ending growth process of purposeful striving, optimal development and becoming a more fully functioning and mature individual. According to **Maslow (1954)** all human beings are born with instinctive needs that

motivate them to grow and develop and to actualize themselves to become all that they are capable of becoming.

## Materials and Methods

### Sample

The sample of study was 50 Indian elderly couples selected from the cities of Lucknow and Gorakhpur. An incidental sampling technique was selected from both the cities to make findings representative to the population. The age of the respondents was ascertained between 60 years to 80 years, with mean age of 70 years. The education ranged between higher secondary (10+2) to post graduation however most of them were graduates. The monthly income of the respondents varied between Rs. 22,000 to 40,000, with a mean income of Rs. 30,000.

### Administration

The scale was individually administered on 50 Indian elderly couples incidentally selected from the cities of Lucknow and Gorakhpur.

### Instructions

Bilingual standard instructions for test were given on the top of scale. The respondents were told to feel free and be honest while replying. They were convinced that their identity and responses received through this inventory shall be used for research work and strictly be confidential.

### Scoring

The 5-point Likert format was used to attempt the items and labeled (5= Strongly Agree and 1= Strongly Disagree). The responses of the identified items were added to generate individual psychological wellness facet score and on summing-up all 50 items to generate composite psychological wellness score. Thus, the minimum possible score of the scale was 50 and the maximum 250. Higher the score indicates high level of psychological wellness and lower the score indicates low psychological wellness with the entire psychological wellness dimension.

**Results**

**Reliability** One of the most commonly used reliability coefficient i.e. Chronbach's Alpha was calculated and was 0.90, significant at 0.001 level. The internal consistency of the scale is quit high and this gives a support that the scale is reliable. The other descriptive statistics for the scale is given in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Descriptive statistics of scale and Reliability (Chronbachs' Alpha)**

| Statistics for SCALE | Mean   | Variance | SD     | Alpha Coefficient | Standardized Alpha | No. of Items |
|----------------------|--------|----------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
|                      | 205.27 | 267.558  | 16.357 | 0.90              | 0.90               | 50           |

**Validity**

Content Validity (face and logical) of the scale was authenticated by professional psychologist/ academicians (numbering to about 10 experts) of the Department of Psychology, Lucknow University and its associated colleges. For establishing the validity cross validity between the items of the psychological wellness scale and psychological wellbeing scale by **Bhogle and Jaiprakash (1995)** was done. Good correspondence was found to exist between the scale results and the considered judgment of the experienced observers.

Using a more structured method, conformity factor analyses present evidence of the measures convergent and discriminate validity. Ten factors emerged in the factor analysis. The percent of variance accounted by factors varies from 20.864 to 2.329%. In summing up all the ten factors explained 69.53% of the total variance as shown in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Description of items, descriptive and factor statistics for overall and facets of psychological wellness**

| Wellness Facets | Item No.                        | Neg. Scoring Items | Total No. of items | Mean | SD   | Factor Statistics |                |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------|------|-------------------|----------------|
|                 |                                 |                    |                    |      |      | Pct. of Var.      | Cum. % of Var. |
| <b>X1</b>       | 49, 28, 14, 29, 19, 30, 42, 31, | 2, 5, 43, 45       | 25                 | 4.02 | 1.11 | 20.864            | 20.864         |

|            |  |       |   |      |      |       |        |
|------------|--|-------|---|------|------|-------|--------|
|            | 40, 3, 21, 13, 24, 15, 34, 7, 17,<br>22, 8, 16, 45, 2, 46, 5, 43 |       |   |      |      |       |        |
| <b>X2</b>  | 25, 6, 26, 12, 38, 37, 9   | 9     | 7 | 3.98 | .984 | 9.747 | 30.611 |
| <b>X3</b>  | 18   |       | 1 | 4.29 | .626 | 7.024 | 37.635 |
| <b>X4</b>  | 48, 41, 20, 36, 32   |       | 5 | 3.86 | 1.14 | 6.644 | 44.279 |
| <b>X5</b>  | 44,39, 10  | 10    | 3 | 4.09 | .886 | 6.347 | 50.626 |
| <b>X6</b>  | 1, 50, 27  | 1, 27 | 3 | 4.22 | .726 | 5.327 | 55.953 |
| <b>X7</b>  | 33, 23   |       | 2 | 3.95 | 1.00 | 4.222 | 60.175 |
| <b>X8</b>  | 35, 4  | 4     | 2 | 2.65 | 1.14 | 3.811 | 63.986 |
| <b>X9</b>  | 47   |       | 1 | 4.29 | 1.20 | 3.216 | 67.202 |
| <b>X10</b> | 11   |       | 1 | 4.39 | 1.11 | 2.329 | 69.531 |

**X1**= Locus of Control, **X2** = Attitude of an individual towards his/ her own self, **X3** = Life Satisfaction, **X4** = Sense of coherence, **X5** = Perception of Reality, **X6** = Intellectual stimulation and Problem Solving, **X7** = Integration, **X8** = Individual's style of doing work, **X9** = Personal Growth and Enhancement, **X10** = Self- Actualization.

### Norms

Based on the data collected from the city of Lucknow and Gorakhpur on 50 Indian elderly couples, the norms for adjudging the level of psychological wellness were prepared using percentiles (Table 1.3), so that the scale could be used purposefully for interventions and for investigations. These norms can be used as cut-off points for interpretation of the composite score of psychological wellness.

**Table 1.3: Norms for adjudging the level of sensitivity about psychological wellness**

| Percentile                    | Psychological Wellness Score | Labeling |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| < 21 <sup>th</sup> percentile | < 191                        | Poor     |

|  |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| 21 <sup>st</sup> - 40 <sup>th</sup> percentile | 191.01 - 199 | Fair         |
| 41 <sup>st</sup> - 60 <sup>th</sup> percentile | 199.01 - 210 | Satisfactory |
| 61 <sup>st</sup> - 80 <sup>th</sup> percentile | 210.01 - 223 | Good         |
| > 80 <sup>th</sup> percentile                  | > 223        | Excellent    |

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