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A Study on Level of Depression among Senior Citizens in Aged Care Centres in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka

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Background: Depression is a prevalent but severe mood disorder that requires therapy. Sri Lanka is one of the world's fastest-aging nations. It is anticipated that, this fast demographic transition will lead to an elderly population of one quarter by 2041. As a consequence, the nation will face profound difficulties, particularly in planning of appropriate elderly-oriented facilities in social care and healthcare industries. In reaction to this need, many initiatives have been introduced to support and safeguard elderly people's welfare.

Objective: To assess the level of depression among senior citizens in aged care centers in Gampaha District

Methods: Institution-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 212 senior citizens aged between 60-80 years in randomly selected six aged care centers in Gampaha District. Convenient sampling method was used to select respondents. Informed consent was obtained prior to study. A self-administered questionnaire was used. Depression was assessed using modified and culturally adapted Geriatric Depression Scale (Short Form) (GDS). According to GDS scores, 0 to 4 suggests normal (no depression), 5 to 8 suggests mild depression, 9 to 11 suggests moderate depression, 12 to 15 suggests severe depression. Data were analyzed using Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Results: The study consisted 157 females (74.1%) and 55 males (25.9%). Depression indicated from the GDS was observed in 146 participants out of the whole 212 study population. In this study, 66 participants had no depression while 118 had mild depression, 27 had moderate depression and one had severe depression. Around 18.9% (n = 40) of the participants had the score of 5 of the study population.

Conclusion: The majority of the inmates in the aged care centers was having symptoms suggestive of mild depression.

Keywords: *Aged Care, Depression, Senior citizens, Sri Lanka*