

## Impact of Partner's Presence and Gender on Stress among Old Age

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of present investigation was to study the effect of partner's presence and gender on stress among old age. There were two independent variables. The first independent variables were life partner varied at two levels i.e. Life partner's presence and life partner absence. The second independent variable was gender also varied at two levels i.e male and female. The dependent variable was stress. For this purpose, stress was measured with the help of stress scale (Singh personal stress sources inventory) constructed and standardized by Arun Kumar Singh (1971). The sample consisted of 100 subject, 50 males and 50 females of age range 60 to 65. Obtained data were analysed by using the Mean value and two-way ANOVA. On the basis of obtained result, it was found that life partner's presence has significantly influencing the cope up style with their stressor, whereas gender has no significant effect on stress.

**Keywords:** *Life Partner, Stress, Old Age and Gender*

Old age is a stage in which person face so many changes. These changes are related to personal, social and economical. The culture of Indian society is to respect and care of old people. All family members are live in combined family system but due to modernization lots of changes are seeing in Indian society in which most big change is increasing nuclear family culture. In that condition the social security of old people is decreasing day by day (Laura et al 2016). Old age is one of the critical stage in human life because in this stage people compelled to live their life in fearful condition. Fear related to loss of life partner and near dear friends (Epinay and Spini D. 2003). These feeling create a stressful condition. Stress is a big risk factor for old person. Stressful condition is correlated so many types of serious health problems like heart attack, diabetes and other psychological problems. Hens Selye (1979) describe that “stress refer to nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it”. Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain.

“Stress is much faceted process that occurs in us in response to event that disrupt or threaten to disrupt our physical or psychological functioning” (Baron 1992). Old people take lot of

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stress due to changes that they cannot be accepting in their life. At this stage economic insecurity and change in social position is also a reason of stress. Life partner is important part of life for every person. No one can take place of life partner and never fill that empty space. In reality the need of life partner is most in the old age because they support and care each other. Old age is the age of going to end. If any person loss their life partner in this stage then it becomes very difficult to cope life situations (Tara et al. 2006). All these changes create a critical time for old person and that time old people feel helpless and also suffering from feeling of loneliness (Rote et. al., 2013). Loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problem, including depression, anxiety, sleep problem and increased stress (Stek et al., 2005). Social insecurity and less social support were associated with greater loneliness.

Gender is an important determinant of human health. Women and men both are different reaction to stress. They also manage stress in very different way. Stressful life event is differently handled by women and men. Study show that women are more stressed in comparison of men (Landau R. and Litwin H.2000). Women deal many roles including mother, career, homemaker and other responsibility. All women have to do a lot of work in their life and at the same time they have a lot of responsibilities. Work pressure, social responsibility, economic condition and health issues are affected female physical and mental health (Paul et al., 2006). Condition such as anxiety, depression stress all effected person life. Stress, depression and anxiety may develop life changing physical health like diabetes, somatoform disorder and chronic pain.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Statement of Problem*

To study the effect of life partner's presence and gender on stress among old age.

#### *Objectives*

- To study the effect of life partner's presence on stress among old age.
- To study the effect of gender on stress among old age.
- To study the interaction effect between life partner presence and gender on stress among old age.

#### *Hypotheses*

- There will be no significant effect of life partner's presence on stress among old age.
- There will be no significant effect of gender on stress among old age.
- There will be no significant interaction effect between life partner's presence and gender on stress among old age.

#### *Sample*

In the present study 100 subject were selected among which 50 male (25 Ss partner present and 25 Ss partner absent) and 50 Female (25 Ss partner present and 25 Ss partner absent).

#### *Design*

A 2X2 factorial design was applied in the present research. The first independent variable of the study is **life partner (A)** with two levels i.e., **life partner's presence (A1)** and **life partner absence (A2)**. The second variable of the study is **gender**, which is varying at two levels i.e., **male** and **female**. The dependent variable of the study is stress.

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### *Measuring tools*

In the present research work stress scale SPSSI (Singh personal stress source inventory) constructed by Arun Kumar were used for data collection. This scale includes 35 items. The scale had high reliability (.77) and validity (.75).

### *Procedure for data collection*

Initially the participants were personally contacted and rapport was established with them. Thereafter the stress inventory was distributed to the subjects individually. After that they were advised to read out the instructions carefully, which were given at front page, subjects were asked to give details of their bio-data and other essential information. The subjects were instructed to fill the test. After all administration the inventories were taken back from all subjects. Data were checked, and scoring was done with the help of the scoring key.

### *Analysis of data*

A two-way analysis of variance has been applied to find out the significance of the main effect and interaction effect.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The present research paper was to study the effect of presence of life partner on stress in old age. For this purpose, two independent variables were selected i.e. life partner and gender. The dependent variable was stress. A two-way analysis of variance has been applied for statistical treatment. The result of this study is summarizing in summary of analysis of variance in table no.1.

*Table No.1 Showing ANOVA stress score of life partner and Gender among old age.*

Source of Variance	Ss	Df	M.S.	F
Life Partner's Presence/Absence (A)	19126.89	1	19126.89	74.13**
Gender (B)	222.01	1	222.01	0.86
A*B	62.41	1	62.41	20.25
Within group	24769.44	96	258.02	
Total	44180.75	99		

*\*\*denotes significant at 0.01 level of confidence*

*\*denotes significant at 0.05 level of confidence*

*Table No.2 Showing Mean score for stress (factor 'A' Life partner)*

Life Partner (A)	N	Total	Mean
Life Partner's Presence (A1)	50	1231	49.24
Life Partner's Absence (A2)	50	2614	105.56

*Table No.3 Showing Mean score for stress (factor 'B' Gender)*

Gender (B)	N	Total	Mean
Male (B1)	50	1848	73.92
Female(B2)	50	1997	79.88

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Statistical analysis of data reveals that F value for the first independent variable, i.e., presence of life partner is 74.13. This value is significant at 0.01 level of confidence [ $F(99, 1) = 19126.89$ ;  $P < .01$ ]. Score indicate that presence of life partner significantly affects the level of stress of old age people.

Table no.1 (ANOVA Summary table) show the 'F' value for second independent variable (Gender), i.e., 0.86. This value is non-significant at any level of confidence. It means no effect of gender on stress among old age.

Statistical data reveals (ANOVA Summary table no.1) that interaction effect between the factor 'A' and 'B'. The 'F' value of interaction effect is 20.25. This value is non-significant at level of confidence. Result shows the non-significant effect between the life partner presence and gender on stress.

Table no. 2 shows the mean score of stress related to life partner. The mean score of life partner presence is 49.24 and the Mean score of life partner absence is 105.56. Table no.3 shows the mean score of gender. The mean score of males is 73.92 and the mean score of females is 79.88.

Old age is a stage in which life partner play very important role because in this stage there is more dependence on each other. Life partner is very important aspect of life especially in old age because they support emotionally and mentally in every situation. Loneliness and living alone is one of the most important factors of stress and depression (**Mishra and Singh 2001**). Result also show that those people who live with their life partner they have less stress in comparison of those who live with alone. Gender also play important role to deal with so many critical situations. The mean score of stress related to male is 73.92 and the mean score of females is 79.88. It means the level of stress is high in female. Men and female both are dealing differently with stress both physically and biologically (**Stek et al. 2005**). There is a clear pattern for the sex specific prevalence rate of various mental disorders. Interaction effect between life partner and gender on stress is not significant among old age people. These study shows that loneliness is single most important predictor of psychological distress among old age.

## CONCLUSION

The result can be summarized in the following manner-

- Life partner as independent variable is significant.
- Gender as independent variable is not significant.
- Interaction between Life partner and Gender is found to be non-significant.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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