

Gender Differences: Bereavement, Social Support, and Depression of Assisted Living Elders

Fallon Parks

Social Work

Abstract: Purpose: The older generation is often overlooked by society today. It is easy to forget about their quality of life. This study was important to find out how that population can best be served. Also, the “Baby-boomers” are getting to the age where they are to enter assisted living facilities. Because of this, even more of the society is to be affected by this topic. The purpose of the study is to understand the gender differences in regards to bereavement, social support, and depression in older adult assisted living residents. Methods: This research is a cross sectional survey study conducted by face-to-face interviews utilizing a quantitative method. Non-probability and purposive sampling methods were used to generate a total of 100 participants aged 65 and over living in assisted living facilities. Those interviewed were interviewed in March at six assisted living facilities in Wichita, Kansas. A structured survey questionnaire was used to measure the dependent variable, which were gender differences. The questionnaire included multiple scales to measure the independent variables, which were bereavement, social support and depression. Results: This study showed significant differences between gender for social support, depression, and bereavement of older adult assisted living residents. The study showed that women received more social support than men. Women were more likely to be depressed than men. Loss of a loved one will affect women more adversely than men. Overall the study showed that women were more affected by depression, bereavement and social support than men. Implications: The significance of this study is to help contribute to the improvement of the overall health of older adults in assisted living facilities. Assisted living facilities and caseworkers need to offer adequate counseling and therapist for the older adults to help them empower their overall wellbeing.

Faculty Sponsor: Kyoung Lee

- *URCAF 2010 second place winner of poster presentations in the Social Science section.*