

Research on the Influencing Factors for Mental Health Services for the Elderly in the Community in Guilin City

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Abstract: *Objective:* Based on the study of 253 elderly people aged 60 and above in the Guilin community, the scale was used to evaluate their mental health service needs, to analyze and grasp the influencing factors of the psychological needs of the elderly, and the research results will lay a theoretical foundation for improving the overall mental health level of the elderly in China and promoting the healthy development of the elderly in China. *Methods:* The elderly in the Guilin community were selected by a multi-stage stratified random sampling method to meet the exclusion and inclusion criteria, and the local Chinese questionnaire designed by scholars was used to allow the participants to answer the questionnaire. IBM SPSS 22 software was used for data processing and analysis. The one-way ANOVA was performed for each demand dimension, and the difference was statistically significant with $P < 0.05$. *Results:* The highest score was 4.142 for the need for mental health activities, followed by the mean score of 3.822 for the need for mental health files. Univariate analysis showed that there were statistically significant differences in the needs of the elderly with different ages, different living conditions, and different levels of physical health status ($P < 0.05$). *Conclusion:* The elderly have the greatest demand for organizing mental health activities, and the demand for mental health services for the elderly in Guilin is mainly affected by age, residence, and physical health.

Keywords: Population ageing; Older age groups; Community mental health

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, China is facing a severe problem of population aging. According to the results of the Seventh National Population Census, there are about 264.02 million elderly people aged 60 and above in China, accounting for 18.70% of the total population, and 190.64 million people aged 65 and above, accounting for 13.5% of the total population^[1]. Older people live in a predominantly family-oriented environment, with narrower social ties than before, and are more likely to experience loneliness. In addition, due to the emergence of a variety of chronic

diseases, the elderly are prone to symptoms such as anxiety, fear, and depression without knowing anything about the occurrence and development process of the disease^[2]. Increasing services for the mental health needs of the elderly in the community, and providing psychological support such as psychological counseling and crisis intervention promptly can not only solve the actual psychological problems of residents but also improve the sense of security and belonging of the elderly group, thereby improving their sense of happiness^[3].

1.1. Mental health issues in older adults

The elderly population is one of the high-risk groups for mental health problems. Many older adults feel lonely and bored in retirement, lacking a sense of self-worth and belonging, which can lead to depression and other mental health problems^[4-5]. Moreover, older people often face the effects of factors such as the loss of a spouse or loved one, increased financial burden, and so on, which can have a negative impact on the mental health of older people^[6-7]. The quality of life of the elderly is one of the priorities of society, and mental health problems will not only affect the personal well-being of the elderly but also have a negative impact on the family and society^[8]. Therefore, research on the mental health of the elderly can raise public awareness, help the elderly to face the challenges of old age, enhance their self-management ability, and improve the quality of life and happiness of the elderly.

1.2. Geriatric mental health services in Guilin

The United States implements an integrated model with the slogan of “one-stop shopping”, and various mental health service resources are fully integrated, emphasizing all-around and systematic treatment, including medication, psychotherapy, social support, and so on^[9]. Guilin City, Guangxi, the elderly services are mainly in accordance with the “Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Regulations on Elderly Services” and other documents, the specific measures mainly include support for the construction of elderly institutions, broadening the channels of elderly services, promoting the standardization of the management of elderly services, improving the quality of the elderly service personnel, and the government encourages the support of cultural and sports activities^[10]. In addition, the “Regulations on Community Health Services” stipulate that community health service institutions shall provide mental health consultation, assessment, intervention, and other services for the elderly, and be equipped with professional personnel^[11]. In the current regulations and policies, there are clear requirements and support to promote the development of mental health services for the elderly, which provides a more extensive and in-depth guarantee and support for the research on the mental health of the elderly.

Through the study of the mental health service needs of the elderly in the community, this paper can better understand the nature, law, and characteristics of mental health problems of the elderly, which is conducive to promoting in-depth research and development in the field of geriatric psychology. Mental health services for the elderly tend to provide psychological support, but the needs of different groups of older people for psychological support are different. Understanding the psychological needs of the elderly and exploring different types of mental health services can improve the matching degree of psychological services for the elderly. At the same time, it can also provide relevant data and reference for policy-making departments.

2. Methods

The study followed a three-step process to extract and analyze data from the accreditation reports: (1) data sourcing, (2) data cleaning and data extraction, and (3) data labeling and data analysis.

2.1. Data sourcing

Firstly, the research purpose, research object, and research scope were determined, and a questionnaire on the mental health service needs of the elderly was designed based on literature research. To ensure that the questionnaires collected are effectively reflected in the real situation, a pre-survey was carried out before this official survey, and the survey scope was carried out in various communities in Guilin. From the beginning of March to mid-April 2023, using the multi-stage stratified random sampling method, two districts and counties (Xiufeng District and Lingui District) were randomly selected from the central urban area and urban-rural junction of Guilin, and then two urban communities were randomly selected from these two districts and counties, and finally 70 residents were randomly selected from each community, and a total of 280 residential communities were selected as the survey objects. Adopt a combination of centralized filling and decentralized household surveys.

2.2. Data cleaning and data extraction

After the enumerator unifies the standards, patiently explains the purpose of the survey and the requirements for filling in the questionnaire to the residents, and distributes the questionnaire after obtaining consent. For residents with visual difficulties and those who are unwilling or unable to write their responses by hand, the enumerator will read out and explain the contents of the questionnaire to them to record the data.

Before the survey, it was estimated that 280 questionnaires would be distributed and returned, and 253 questionnaires were actually recovered, with an effective recovery rate of about 90.36%. The inclusion criteria for the survey subjects were ≥ 60 years old, urban rather than agricultural hukou, and living in Guilin for more than half a year.

The exclusion criteria are those who fill in the questionnaire involuntarily and those who have a serious physical illness or mental illness and are unable to complete the questionnaire normally. Questionnaire check: complete data double entry and logical error correction, and eliminate invalid questionnaires such as missing answers, not filling in the answers according to the requirements of the instructions, and filling in the logical contradictions of the answer items.

2.3. Data analysis and data labeling

IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software was used for data processing and analysis, and descriptive statistical analysis was used to investigate the demographic structure of the survey sample and the demand analysis of each variable. The one-way ANOVA was performed on the mean score of each demand dimension, and the difference was statistically significant with $P < 0.05$ as the difference.

3. Results

3.1. Survey sample structure descriptive statistics

The survey subjects are the elderly aged 60 and above in the community of Guilin City, and the questionnaire designed mainly investigates the basic information of the elderly, including gender, age group, education level, marital status, residence status, and physical condition. As shown in Table 1, the gender ratio of the survey subjects is more balanced, of which 53% are women and 47% are men, close to the ratio of 1:1. In terms of age composition, there are three main age groups, with 114 of the surveyed elderly people aged 60–69, accounting for about 45%, followed by the age group of 70–79 years old and the advanced age group of 80 years old and above.

3.2. Mental health service needs for older adults

The demand for various mental health services among the elderly in Guilin varies, among which the demand for mental health activities (including geriatric psychological communication activities, elderly educational activities, and communication activities with children) is the largest, with an average value of 4.142 (scores of 1–5, respectively, strongly disagree, not very agree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree), followed by the demand for psychological counseling and counseling services, the demand for mental health knowledge lectures, and the third is the demand for mental health monitoring and mental health service personnel, and the overall demand is “average.” The survey points of the listed demand are above 3, so it can be considered that Guilin must carry out community mental health services for the elderly (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Mental health service needs for the elderly

Service needs	Sample size	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Mental health knowledge lecture service needs	253	5	3.801	0.749
Psychological counseling and counseling service needs	253	5	3.858	0.836
Organizational mental health activity needs	253	5	4.142	0.670
Mental health monitoring needs	253	5	3.731	0.847
Mental health service worker needs	253	5	3.789	0.849

3.3. Analysis of variance of the impact of demographic characteristics on demand

Age had no significant effect on the demand for mental health knowledge lecture services, psychological counseling and counseling, psychological communication activities, and psychological monitoring services, but had a significant impact on the demand for mental health service personnel (P value = 0.022 < 0.05). The average value was observed to show that the elderly aged 80 and above had the greatest need for mental health service personnel, followed by the elderly in the age group of 60–69 years old, and the least demand for this was the elderly aged 70–79 years, rather than the need for mental health services with age (**Table 2**).

Residence had a significant impact on the overall demand for mental health services for the elderly ($P = 0.008 < 0.05$), which was mainly manifested in the demand for psychological counseling, psychological monitoring services, and mental health service personnel. Older people living alone face a variety of psychological dilemmas due to a lack of close family relationships and social support networks, including loneliness and feelings of loss, as there is no one to share their life experiences or provide emotional support (**Table 2**).

The physical health status of the elderly had a significant impact on the demand for psychological monitoring services and the demand for mental health service personnel (P values were 0.028 and 0.043, both less than 0.05). The average value was observed that the worse the physical condition, the greater the demand for this kind of person because when the physical condition of the elderly is worse, they will face various life challenges and psychological pressures, such as long-term pain, loss of relatives and friends, financial difficulties, feeling helpless, and so on, which will lead to psychological problems such as depressed mood, anxiety, and depression in the elderly (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Impact of demographic characteristics on demand

Variable name	Variable value	Sample size	Mean	SD	F	P
Mental health service worker needs	60–69 years old	114	3.77	0.858	3.866	0.022**
	70–79 years old	76	3.625	0.87		
	≥ 80 years old	63	4.02	0.761		
Counseling and counseling needs	Living alone	79	4.08	0.654	8.378	0.004***
	Not living alone	174	3.757	0.89		
Psychological monitoring service needs	Living alone	79	3.987	0.628	10.913	0.001***
	Not living alone	174	3.615	0.908		
Mental health service worker needs	Living alone	79	3.953	0.72	4.348	0.038**
	Not living alone	174	3.714	0.893		
Psychological monitoring service needs	Healthy	89	3.835	0.903	3.08	0.028**
	1~2 chronic diseases	101	3.538	0.839		
	≥ 3 chronic diseases	53	3.881	0.704		
	Serious illness	10	3.967	0.838		
Mental health service worker needs	Healthy	89	3.764	0.957	2.757	0.043**
	1~2 chronic diseases	101	3.656	0.784		
	≥ 3 chronic diseases	53	4.014	0.699		
	Serious illness	10	4.15	0.952		

Note: *** and ** represent the significance levels of 1% and 5% respectively.

4. Discussion

Mental health needs services for the elderly should follow the principle of individualization. The elderly have different needs for mental health in all aspects of mental health at different ages, physical conditions, and living conditions, and the degree of demand is also inconsistent. Some older people need to focus on their physical health and health care, while others are more concerned about socializing, activities, and recreation, and their needs and values are influenced by the geography and cultural background of the community in which they live. Therefore, it is necessary to provide services on a person-by-person basis, adapting to their needs in a local context.

Older people in their 60–70 years are more concerned about disease prevention, retirement, and family issues, so they can be offered courses and counseling services for health and health insurance. Older people aged 70–80 years are more likely to face physical and cognitive problems and need more physical care and rehabilitation support, as well as social and recreational activities, such as physical exercise, puzzle games, etc., to strengthen communication with the elderly. Older people over the age of 80 face greater health problems and life difficulties, such as the loss of a spouse, hospitalization, and disability, so they need more substantive support and treatment and emotional and spiritual support, for which community care, domestic services, etc., should be strengthened.

When carrying out community health work, it is necessary to grasp the individuality in the commonality, strengthen the management of the physical function of each elderly person, and do a good job in evaluation and monitoring. Formulate a sound mental health monitoring mechanism for the elderly, and pay attention to the living habits, disease conditions, psychological state, and social environment of the elderly in the process of service.

Implement targeted health care and management through health check-ups and follow-ups, and provide timely feedback to prevent and resolve psychological problems.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the specific needs of the elderly for mental health services and found that the elderly have the greatest need for organizing mental health activities in terms of overall needs. Among the demand for mental health knowledge lecture services among the elderly in Guilin, the demand for knowledge service lectures on adapting to retirement life is the largest. Among the demand for mental health monitoring services, the need for establishing mental health records is the largest. In terms of the demand for mental health service workers, compared with psychologists, psychiatrists, caregivers, and professional volunteers, the elderly in Guilin may have less need for psychiatrists. The demand for mental health services for the elderly in Guilin is mainly affected by age, residence, and physical health.

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