

Attitude toward Death of the Elderly in Rural Community

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1. Purpose

When people get older, time becomes more precious and the awareness of Impended death may change the way they manage their lives and spend their remaining time. Nevertheless, it seems that there is a general reluctance among researchers, and even among the elderly themselves to deal with the subject of death and its impact on the lifestyles they have. This study was performed to investigate the attitude toward death of the community dwelling elderly and to examine the relationship between the attitude toward death and the demographic and related variables.

2. Methods

Subjects for this study were 168 adults whose age ranged 60-92. Sixty- six of total subjects were married and 102 subjects already lost their spouse. Data were collected using questionnaires from November of 2005 through January of 2006. Fear of Death Scale that was made by Collect & Lester in 1969 and translated Hae-Kyung Suh(1987) was used to measure the fear of death and the responses were made on a 5 point Likert - type scale. The data was analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, t test, ANOVA, and Scheffe test as a post hoc test.

3. Results

The item mean scores of FODS was 3.11(SD=.41) out of 5. The item mean scores of each subcategory of FODS were as follows. : Death anxiety of self was 2.72(SD=.544). Dying of self was 3.20(SD=.697). Death anxiety of others was 3.29(DS=.600) and Dying of others was 3.23(SD=.644). There was a statistically significance differences between the level of FODS and age ($F=3.21, p=.043$), perceived economic level ($F= -2.18, p=. 030$), religion ($F=7.00, p=. 001$) and degree of religious devotion ($F=4.63, p= .011$). Sixties and seventies showed a higher level of death anxiety than eighties and nineties. Aged person who consider their economic level as low and who were affiliated with Buddihism exhibited a higher level of death anxiety than others.

4. Conclusion

Health professionals may make effort to learn more about as much as they can in order to develop healthier attitudes toward death and better aid for the elderly and to comfort them and their families. The healthy attitude toward death is considers as a psychological well -being in old age. The death education programs are needed for dedication to the inevitability of death and the preparation of life for the elderly.