

Self-evaluation of Mental Health of the Elderly in Different Age Groups and Its Influencing Factors

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[Abstract] With the development of social economy and the acceleration of aging, the problem of the elderly, especially the mental health of the elderly, has received more and more attention. According to the empirical investigation and analysis, compared with the middle-aged and elderly people, the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly is poor; physical health status, family economic status, relationship with the main supporters, major supporters' economic status and social security level for the elderly. People's mental health self-evaluation has a significant impact; the self-reported regression results of mental health in different age groups found that gender, household registration, education level, marital status, economic status of the main supporters, and distance from the main supporters for different ages. The self-evaluation of mental health of the elderly plays a different role. Therefore, the focus of improving the self-evaluation of mental health of the elderly in different ages should be: to create favorable conditions for the elderly to continue working, to ensure their economic independence; to pay attention to the psychological state of the middle-aged elderly widowed, to help them get out of widowhood shadow; give older people more care, and their children will feed back and enjoy their old age.

[Keywords] Different age groups; The elderly; Mental health self-evaluation; Influencing factors

1. Introduction

According to the sixth national census, China's population aged 60 and over accounted for 13.26% of the total population, of which population aged 65 and over accounted for 8.87% of the total population, and the population over 80 reached 20.95 million. Compared with the fifth national census in 2000, the proportion of the population aged 60 and over increased by 2.93%, and the proportion of the population aged 65 and over increased by 1.91%.^[1] The China Retirement Agency Development Research Report indicated that as of the end of 2014, China was 60 years old. The number of elderly people and above has reached 212 million, and the number of elderly people has reached 24 million.^[2] Twelve kinds of indications show that the problem of aging in China is becoming more and more serious and it is showing an aging trend. The psychological situation of the elderly in China is not optimistic. In 2007, the survey on the health status of the elderly conducted by the National Office for the Elderly showed that the health status of most elderly people in our country is generally in a sub-health state.^[3]

Due to the deterioration of brain function and the rapid changes in life before and after retirement, 85% of the elderly have more or less psychological problems of different degrees, and 27% have obvious mental disorders such as anxiety and depression^[4] The highest suicide rate in China is for the elderly. Among the elderly who died from suicide, 95% of the elderly have different psychological barriers.^[5] Wang Cuichong and Deng Zhiqiang believe that the elderly population is a very vulnerable group. It is in a disadvantaged position in terms of physiology and psychology, and its living conditions are worrying.^[6] Xu Qin's research results show that about one in ten elderly people often feel tight and afraid, or have loneliness because they live alone, the economy cannot stand on their own feet, and they cannot get medical services.^[7] Studies have shown that the mental health of the elderly in China, especially the mental health status of the elderly, is not optimistic, which has become the focus of social attention.

How about the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups (lower, middle and old age) in China? What are the influencing factors of the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly? How do these factors affect the mental health self-evaluation of older people of different ages? Is there a difference in its impact? These are the issues to be studied in this paper.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Mental Health Status of the Elderly in Different Age Groups

What is the mental health of the elderly in different age groups? Shi Yan's research results show that young people have lower sense of loss and loneliness and better psychological status.^[8] Scholars have not yet reached an agreement on the mental health status of the elderly. Many mathematicians believe that the mental health status of the elderly is better. Xu Qin's research shows that the positive mentality of the elderly is dominant.^[7] The results of Wang Jianying et al. showed that the overall mental state of the elderly was good and the mood was stable.^[9] Li Deming and others also believe that the mental health of most elderly people in China is better.^[10] However, Wang Cuichong and Deng Zhiqiang have different opinions. They believe that the elderly are very vulnerable and psychologically inferior.^[6] Wu Zhien and other surveys on the social psychological status of the elderly in rural areas found that although the social psychology of most elderly people is peaceful, there are still some problems.^[11] There is no difference in the mental health of the elderly in different age groups, and scholars' research has not reached an agreement. The results of Wu Zhenyun et al showed that the total age difference was not significant except for some aspects of mental health status in the elderly group over 75 years old. ^[12]

2.2 Influencing Factors of Mental Health of the Elderly in Different Age Groups

Wu Jie believes that the interpersonal needs of urban young people need to meet the situation, family needs to meet the situation, cognitive needs to meet the status and value needs to meet the situation has a certain degree of mediation effect on their mental health.^[13] Wu Jie and Cheng Cheng's survey results show that in addition to interpersonal needs to meet the situation and family satisfaction, social support also affects the mental health of young people in urban areas.^[14] Shiyan used the low-age empty nest elderly as the survey object. Through sequence analysis, it was found that the factors such as the living conditions of the spouse and the parent-child relationship had significant effects on the psychological status of the younger people, and whether the empty nest and the children were the only children were not significantly affected.^[8]

Xu Qin's research shows that the mental state of female elderly people is not as good as that of male elderly people. The mental state of urban elderly is better than that of rural elderly. Healthy body, good education, stable income, happy marriage, active lifestyle and high quality hygiene Health services play a positive role in the psychology of the elderly.^[7] Li Deming and others believe that the high level of education, living in cities, the main source of income depends on the pension of themselves or their spouses, and the elderly in the nursing homes are better psychologically.^[10] Zhang Wenjuan and Li Shuzheng's research results show that the elderly with their daughters have the best psychological condition; the increase in the number of children frequently visited is conducive to the mental health of the elderly, and the positive psychological effects of the son's frequent visits are more obvious; The financial support provided by children also has a subtle effect on the mental health of the elderly. The excessive dependence on daily life that cannot be maintained or the financial support provided to the children is not conducive to their mental health.^[15] Liao Xiaochun's survey found that, Factors affecting subjective well-Being of older adults in addition to self-assessment of health status, daily life ability and sleep status also affect their subjective well-being, and there is a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and subjective well-being.

The results of some studies have shown that the academic research on the mental health of the elderly and their influencing factors has achieved certain results, but there are still some shortcomings:

- (1) There are relatively many studies on the mental health and its influencing factors of the elderly, and there are few studies on the elderly in the younger age;
- (2) Study on the mental health and its influencing factors of the elderly in a certain age group (low age or old age), and the lack of psychological self-evaluation and influencing factors of the elderly in different age groups (lower, middle and old age) . On this basis, this paper divides the elderly into three categories: younger, middle-aged and older, compares and analyzes the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups, and studies the influencing factors of the mental health

self-evaluation of the elderly through regression model, and analyzes the factors. Whether there is a difference in the impact of mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups.

3. Research Methods and Research Design

3.1 Research Methods

This study used data from the survey on the demand situation of urban and rural elderly and the demand for elderly care services organized by the Department of Law and Politics of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of North China Electric Power University in 2012. The survey involved rural areas and cities in various provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government except Tibet. A total of 2,200 questionnaires were distributed and 2,028 valid questionnaires were returned. The effective recovery rate of the questionnaire was 92.18%. Among them, 905 elderly people aged 60-69, accounting for 45.20%; 813 elderly people aged 70-79, accounting for 40.61%; 284 elderly people aged 80 and over, accounting for 14.19%; the rural elderly accounted for 44.93%; the male elderly accounted for 55.45%.

The self-assessment of mental health and the influencing factors of the 2,028 elderly people were quantitatively analyzed by Stata software. On the one hand, it explores the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups; on the other hand, using the Ordered Probit model to analyze the factors affecting the overall elderly and the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups. On this basis, it proposes feasible suggestions for improving the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different ages.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Division of the Age Groups of the Elderly

According to demography, 60-69 years old is the elderly population, 70-79 years old is the middle-aged elderly population, and 80-year-old and older are the elderly population. According to demographics, the age group of the elderly and related research by domestic scholars, the old people in the sample are divided into three categories: Older age (60-69 year olds), middle-aged (70-79 years old) and older (80 years old and older).

3.2.2 Selection of Variables

(1) Selection of Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is the self-assessment of the mental health of the elderly and is the ordering variable. When the mental health of the elderly is rated as poor, the assignment is 1; the mental health self-assessment is generally 2, and the assignment is 2; if the mental health self-evaluation is good, the assignment is 3. Among all the

elderly interviewed 72. 21% of the mental health was rated as good, but some of the elderly had poor self-evaluation of mental health, indicating that the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in China is better, and it is also necessary to take active and effective measures to improve Self-evaluation of mental health of some elderly people. According to the age group, the old-aged elderly have the highest proportion of mental health self-evaluation (poor and general), which is 30.04%, followed by the middle-aged elderly, and the younger middle-aged people have the lowest proportion of mental health self-evaluation for 26. 67%.

(2) Selection of Independent Variables

The variables at the three levels of individual, family and society are selected. The individual level includes five variables: gender, age, household registration, education level, and physical health. The family level includes marital status, family economic status, distance from the main supporter (replaced by the required time), and relationship with the main supporter; there are 6 variables in the source of the main supporters' economic status and pension expenses; the social level refers to the one level of social security.

4. The Results and Analysis

(1) Gender has a certain role in promoting the mental health self-evaluation of the younger and the older people, but it inhibits the mental health self-evaluation of the middle-aged elderly. That is to say, the mental health self-assessment of male elders in older and older people is better than that of females. The self-evaluation of mental health of middle-aged males is slightly worse than that of middle-aged females.

(2) Self-evaluation of mental health among middle-aged and elderly people in cities is relatively poor compared with rural areas, but the mental health of senior citizens in older cities is better than that of older rural elderly, which is consistent with the results of Xu Qin and Li Deming. There are three reasons for this phenomenon. The employment of the elderly is closely related to their subjective well-being and mental health. In the rural areas, some middle-aged and elderly people are still engaged in part-time work and exchange their own labor for economic income. This will feel proud, dignified and valuable. Therefore, the mental health self-evaluation of rural middle-aged and elderly people is better; People experience from “workers” to “elders”, many male elderly people are very likely to be unsuitable, which in turn affects their mental health self-evaluation. Second, family-based social support, including the support of children and the filial piety of children, is an important factor in the psychological status of the elderly in rural areas. Older people are declining due to the rapid deterioration of physiological functions, physical health, labor ability and self-care ability; rural elderly are rarely able to earn income through their own labor, economic independence is reduced, and they often rely on their families. In this case, when the family members are unable to provide the necessary assistance in time, the mentality and quality of life of the elderly in rural areas will be seriously affected.

Third, the mode of medical expenses and the level of social security have an important impact on the psychological status of the elderly, especially the elderly. Most of the elderly in urban areas have pensions and medical insurance. Other social security funds are more than the elderly in rural areas. Life can be basically guaranteed. It is also relatively easy to see a doctor than a rural elderly. This is a self-assessment of mental health.

(3) The degree of education promotes the self-evaluation of mental health of middle-aged and elderly people to a certain extent, but it inhibits the mental health self-evaluation of younger people to a certain extent. That is to say, the higher the education level, the better the mental health self-evaluation of the middle-aged and elderly people, and the higher the education level of the younger the elderly, the worse the mental health self-evaluation.

(4) The marital status has a positive effect on the mental health self-evaluation of the younger and the older people, and has a significant impact on the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly, but it inhibits the psychology of the middle-aged elderly to a certain extent. That is to say, the widowed elderly in the elderly and the elderly are better in self-evaluation, while the widowed middle-aged elderly have poorer mental health self-evaluation.

(5) The farther away from the main supporters, the better the mental health self-evaluation of the middle-aged and elderly people, but the worse the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly. The reason for this phenomenon is that most middle-aged and elderly people have relatively good physiology, physical health and self-care ability. They also hope to have free space and keep a certain distance from their children. Therefore, they are far from the main supporters. The farther away, the better the mental health self-evaluation of middle-aged and elderly people is; the older people are relatively poor in physical health, the daily life needs people to take care of, the activity space is also smaller, and it is hoped that family members and children will often visit and accompany them. Self-evaluation of mental health is better for older people who are closer to the main supporters.

(6) The economic status of the main supporters can promote the mental health self-evaluation of middle-aged and elderly people, and it is suitable for middle-aged. The influence of the elderly is significant, but it inhibits the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly. That is to say, for middle-aged and elderly people, the better the economic status of the main supporters, the better their mental health self-evaluation, but the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly is the opposite.

(7) The social security level promotes the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different ages to a certain extent, and has a significant impact on the mental health self-evaluation of middle-aged and elderly people, but it does not significantly affect the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly.

5. Conclusion

The basic description analysis shows that compared with middle-aged and elderly people, the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly is poor; the regression results show that the physical health, family economic status, and the relationship between the main supporters, the economic status of the main supporters and social security Factors such as level have a significant influence on the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly; the results of the influencing factors of mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups indicate the marital status, the economic status of the main dependents, the gender, the nature of the household registration, the level of education, and the distance of the main supporters. These play different roles in the mental health self-evaluation of the elderly in different age groups.

Younger elders attach great importance to their family's economic status, and family economic status has a significant impact on their mental health self-assessment. This shows that young people in the young age attach great importance to their economic ability and hope to be economically independent and self-sufficient. Moreover, their physical health is relatively good. Just after retirement, many young people still have high enthusiasm for their work, and they hope to use their residual heat to realize their own value. Therefore, all sectors of society should provide convenience for young people to continue working. This will not only help the elderly achieve their own value, but also alleviate the social pressures brought about by the aging process.

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