



## A comparative study of the death anxiety among institutionalized and non-institutionalized aged

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the present study was to investigate the impact of institutionalization, sex and age of the aged on death anxiety. The sample for the study comprised of 180 Institutionalized and 180 Non-institutionalized aged from Ahmadabad city. Institutionalized aged were selected from various old-age homes in Ahmadabad. Personal data sheet and Templer's (1970), Death anxiety scale were used to collect the required data. 2x2x3 factorial design was planned where institutionalization, sex and age were considered as independent variables and death anxiety as dependent variables. Accordingly, 2x2x3 ANOVA was carried out to test the hypothesis. Results The Death anxiety of institutionalized is higher than the non-institutionalized aged. The Death anxiety of female is higher than the male aged. The Death anxiety of medium and high age is higher than the low age of aged. The any interaction effects are not significant.*

### Keywords :

#### Introduction:

The changing demographic profile of India highlights a rapid increase in the aged's population. Due to increased life expectancy and better living condition, the population of old people is rising day by day. Primarily as consequence of a rapidly increasing proportion of the aged in the human population the study of aging is rapidly developing. The objectives of modern research on aging are to make life in the last stages of human existence pleasant and livable (Douglas, 1980).

The process of industrialization, urbanization and modernization is ushering changes in value system and traditional family system. With decline of family solidarity various institutions have come up to take care of aged. Generally in India negative factors tend to predominate the decision to enter an old age home, while gerontology has its objective a "Livelier Longevity", the question arises, what is the effect of old age homes on the death anxiety of the elderly.

Old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings, and thus the end of the human life cycle. Old age has been referred as late adulthood which begins in the 60's and lasts until death. Death anxiety is defined as "the thoughts, fears, and emotion about that final event of living that one experience under more normal conditions of life" (Belsky, 1999).

The various factors psychologists have studied in attempting to measure death anxiety include age, environment, religious faith and ego integrity, or a personal sense of fulfillment and self worth. A complicating aspect of studying death anxiety is that actually measuring anxiety as it relates to these variables has been difficult. The studies used in examining death anxiety do not experimentally manipulate the variables, thus limiting conclusions to correlations (Forner & Neimeyer, 1999).

Death anxiety is common in our society these days. Lots of people are afraid to die, and there can be endless reasons for this fear. Death anxiety has received considerable attention among the various death attitudes. This is partly because man has a tendency of fearing everything which is not known to him, and death is an unknown entity. Death is very near in old age, hence a logical belief would be that death anxiety

is more among the aged in comparison to the youngsters. However, studies contradict this notion. Death involves the loss of loved ones, of control, of achievement and aspiration, and so on. The feeling of helplessness over not being able to control one's death gives rise to free-floating anxiety about the unforeseen.

Erikson's psychosocial theory states that in later stages of life "ego integrity" is attained. Erikson proposed that when person reaches late adulthood he/she engages in life review, if elderly find meaning and purpose in life ego integrity is attained and hence should have lower death anxiety (Belsky, 1999).

#### Aims of the study:

1. To study the death anxiety among institutionalized and non-institutionalized aged.
2. To study the death anxiety among aged Males and Females.
3. To study the death anxiety among Low, medium and high age in aged.

#### Hypothesis:

1. There is no difference between the death anxiety of the institutionalized and non-institutionalized aged.
2. There is no difference between the death anxiety of the aged males and females.
3. There is no difference between the death anxiety of the low, medium and high age in the aged.
4. There is no interaction effect of the death anxiety in the residence and sex of the aged.
5. There is no interaction effect of the death anxiety g in the residence and age of the aged.
6. There is no interaction effect of the death anxiety in the sex and age of the aged.
7. There is no interaction effect of the death anxiety in the residence, sex and age of the aged.

#### Sample:

Sample in this study consisted of 360 subjects which included equal number of males and females. The subjects were between 60 to 90 years. Of these 360 subjects 180 elderly were staying in old age homes and 180 were staying with their fam-

ily. The institutionalized samples were drawn from 7 old age homes run by various social organizations in Ahmadabad. The non-institutionalized sample was also drawn from the same city. An attempt was made to match the two samples as far as possible.

#### Tools used:

The following tools were used in the present study:

#### 1. Personal Data sheet :

A personal data sheet developed by the investigator was used to collect information about Residence, sex, age etc.

#### 2. Death Anxiety Scale :

Death anxiety scale developed by Templer's (1970), was used to measure death anxiety. The scale contains 15 items with two, true and false response alternative. The maximum possible score is fifteen and the minimum is zero. High score indicates high level of death anxiety and low score indicate low level of death anxiety. Templer (1970) has reported a test – retest reliability coefficient is 0.83 and internal consistency coefficient is 0.76. The author has reported satisfactory validity of the questionnaire. The Gujarati version used in the present study had correlation between 0.94 with the original English version.

#### Statistical Analysis:

In this study 'F' and Test was used for statistical analysis.

#### Result and Discussion:

**Table No. 1**

**Summary of the 2x2x3 analysis of variance based on death anxiety of elderly persons with respect to residence, sex and age (N = 360)**

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	df	Mean Sum of Square	F
A (Residence)	54.80	1	54.80	11.23**
B (Sex)	60.03	1	60.03	12.30**
C (Age)	650.61	2	325.31	66.66**
AxB	8.23	1	8.23	1.69NS
AxC	20.82	2	10.41	2.13NS
BxC	2.22	2	1.11	0.23NS
ABxC	10.18	2	5.09	1.04NS
SSW	1697.10	348	4.88	
SST	2503.99	359		
** P < 0.01, NS = Not Significant				

**Table No. 2**

**Scores, means and difference of mean of death anxiety of elderly persons with respect to residence, sex and age**

Independent Variable	N	Mean	Difference of Mean
A1 (Institutionalized)	180	10.99	
A2 (Non-Institutionalized)	180	10.34	0.65
B1 (Male)	180	10.26	
B2 (Female)	180	11.07	0.81
C1 (Low 60-69 Years)	120	8.99	Low and Medium 1.73
C2 (Medium 70-79 Years)	120	10.72	Low and High 3.29
C3 (High 80-89 Years)	120	12.28	Medium and High 1.56

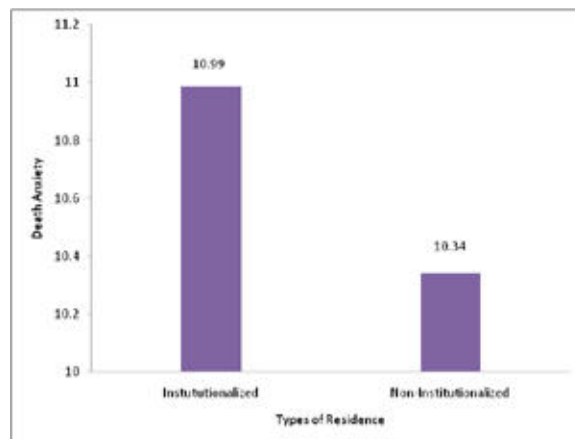
According to table No. 1 it is observed that 'F' value of Death anxiety of elderly persons staying in institutionalized and non institutionalized is 11.23, Which does show significant difference to a level of 0.01. looking at the table No. 2 it is observed that score of Death anxiety of institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly persons are 10.99 and 10.34 respectively. Their difference is 0.65. The difference can be seen in the mean value is due to certainty situation but there is significant difference between means. The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be said that death anxiety of non-institutionalized than institutionalized aged is more. This difference can also be seen from figure (graph) No. 1 designed on the basis

of obtained result.

**Graph No. 1**

**X = Types of residence (Institutionalized A<sub>1</sub> and Non-Institutionalized A<sub>2</sub>)**

= 1.00 Sem. = 0.20 Average Score



It is observed from table No.1 that 'F' value of Death anxiety of male and female elderly persons is 12.30 which does exhibit significant difference at a level of 0.01. From table No. 2 it can be seen that score of Death anxiety of male and female elderly persons are 10.26 and 11.07 respectively. The difference between them is 0.81. The difference can be seen in the mean value is due to certainty situation but there is significant difference between means. The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be said that death anxiety of male than female aged is more. This difference can also be seen from figure (graph) No. 2 designed on the basis of obtained result.

**Graph No. 2**

**X = Sex (Male B<sub>1</sub> and Female B<sub>2</sub>)**

Y = 1.00 Sem. = 0.50 Average Score

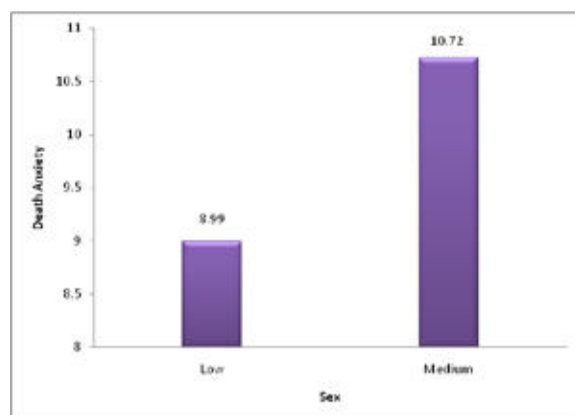


Table No.1 scores that 'F' value of Death anxiety amongst low, medium and high aged persons is 66.66 which is significant at a level of 0.01. Table No. 2 indicates that mean scores of Death anxiety of low, medium and high aged elderly persons are 8.99, 10.72 and 12.28 respectively. The difference between the mean score of Death anxiety of low and medium aged elderly persons is 1.72. where as that of low and high aged elderly persons and medium and high aged elderly persons is 3.29 and 1.56 respectively. Therefore refusing null hypothesis it can be said that aging affects ones Death anxiety. The difference can be seen in the mean value is due to certainty situation but there is significant difference between means. The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be said that death anxiety of low, Medium than high age of aged is more. This difference can also be seen from figure (graph) No. 3 designed on the basis of obtained result.

**Graph No. 3****X = Age (Low C, Medium C, and High C<sub>3</sub>)**

Y= 1.00 Sem. = 2.00 Average Score

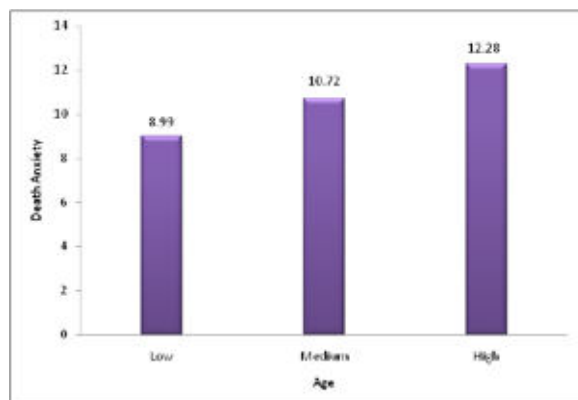


Table No. 1 it can be observed that 'F' values obliged from four interaction AxB, AxC, BxC and AxBxC with respect to residence (Institutionalized and non-institutionalized) Sex (Male and Female) and age (Low, Medium and High) statistical. These 'F' Value show no interaction therefore from these data it can be said that residence, sex and age, and their interaction with one another do not affect our Death anxiety.

**Conclusion :**

1. The Death anxiety of institutionalized is higher than the non-institutionalized aged.
2. The Death anxiety of female is higher than the male aged.
3. The Death anxiety of medium and high age is higher than the low age of aged.
4. There is no significant interaction effect of the Death anxiety in the Residence and sex of aged.
5. There is no significant interaction effect of the Death anxiety in the Residence and age of aged.
6. There is no significant interaction effect of the Death anxiety in the sex and age of aged.
7. There is no significant interaction effect of the Death anxiety in the Residence, sex and age of aged.

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