

# Adjustment and Mental Efficiency in the Aging Population

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## ABSTRACT

Aging is a journey etched in time's embrace. It is life's tapestry woven in wisdom's hue. Old age is the closing period of life. It is the period when people move away from desirable periods or the time of usefulness. It is associated with deterioration of all physical and psychological factors, isolation from social economic and other activities. A study on elderly was conducted to examine adjustment and mental efficiency and to suggest the suitable measures for enhancing mental efficiency, which can help them to adjust to the change life patterns. Interviews were conducted to collect the data from the respondents. The study was carried out with 36 elderly living in old age homes in Jagadhri town of district Yamunanagar, Haryana and 40 elderly living with the families selected purposively. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents (75.4%) had moderate levels of depression and mental efficiency. Elderly living with the families scored better than elderly living in old age homes in health, home, social, mental, emotional and financial areas of adjustment. 98.3% of respondents living in old age homes were poorly adjusted with regard to health, social, mental, emotional and financial areas.

The psychological components of aging are interconnected with both biological and social processes, making it challenging to separate them distinctly.

**Key Words-** Elderly, Mental Efficiency, Psychological Adjustment, Depression, Health and Social Adjustment.

Aging is a journey dictated by the cycle of years gone by. It is an expression of existence dictated by experience and wisdom. The later stage of human life tends to be a transition from previous, more vigorous phases. At this age, people tend to experience a decreasing capacity in terms of mental and physical powers and tend to become less engaged in social, occupational, and civic activities.

Adjusting to physical changes, retirement, loss of loved ones, and potential health issues can affect one's emotional well-being. Mental efficiency might decline in certain cognitive functions like processing speed and memory, but other skills like problem-solving can actually improve with age due to accumulated knowledge and experience. However, aging can also bring wisdom, resilience, and a deeper appreciation for life. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, staying socially connected, and engaging in mental and physical activities can positively influence the impact of aging.

Successful adjustment often involves maintaining a positive mindset, staying socially connected, pursuing meaningful activities, and seeking support when needed. Establishing new routines, focusing on personal well-being, and embracing the positive aspects of aging contribute to a more fulfilling and adaptive experience in the later stages of life. The present study was designed to find out the impact of aging on adjustment and mental efficiency.

## **Materials and Method**

### **Sample:**

The sample consisted of 76 elderly of which 36 were living in old age homes and 40 with their families selected purposively.

### **Tools used:**

1. Shamshad Jasbir Old Age Adjustment Inventory ( SJOAI ) by Hussain and Kaur (1995)
2. PGI Battery for Assessment of Mental Efficiency in the Elderly ( PGI - AMEE ) by Adarsh Kohli , S.K.Verma & Dwarka Prasad

## **RESULTS**

It has been reported that quite considerable number of elderly need healthcare financial assistance to cope up with disability and dependency, sense of isolation, feeling of social deprivation due to negligence and low self-esteem.

**Table 1 Adjustment among Elderly**

| <b>Areas of Adjustment/<br/>Category</b> | <b>Good</b>                     |                                     | <b>Average</b>                  |                                     | <b>Poor</b>                     |                                     |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                                          | <b>Elderly In Old Age Homes</b> | <b>Elderly Living With Families</b> | <b>Elderly In Old Age Homes</b> | <b>Elderly Living With Families</b> | <b>Elderly In Old Age Homes</b> | <b>Elderly Living With Families</b> |
| <b>Health</b>                            | <b>13.88</b>                    | <b>22.5</b>                         | <b>25</b>                       | <b>35</b>                           | <b>61.11</b>                    | <b>42.5</b>                         |
| <b>Home</b>                              | <b>16.66</b>                    | <b>47.5</b>                         | <b>27.77</b>                    | <b>30</b>                           | <b>55.55</b>                    | <b>22.5</b>                         |
| <b>Social</b>                            | <b>11.11</b>                    | <b>62.5</b>                         | <b>22.22</b>                    | <b>20</b>                           | <b>66.66</b>                    | <b>17.5</b>                         |
| <b>Marital</b>                           | <b>8.33</b>                     | <b>67.5</b>                         | <b>25</b>                       | <b>20</b>                           | <b>66.66</b>                    | <b>12.5</b>                         |
| <b>Emotional</b>                         | <b>22.22</b>                    | <b>57.5</b>                         | <b>33.33</b>                    | <b>27.5</b>                         | <b>44.44</b>                    | <b>15</b>                           |
| <b>Financial</b>                         | <b>19.44</b>                    | <b>52.5</b>                         | <b>30.55</b>                    | <b>32.5</b>                         | <b>50</b>                       | <b>15</b>                           |

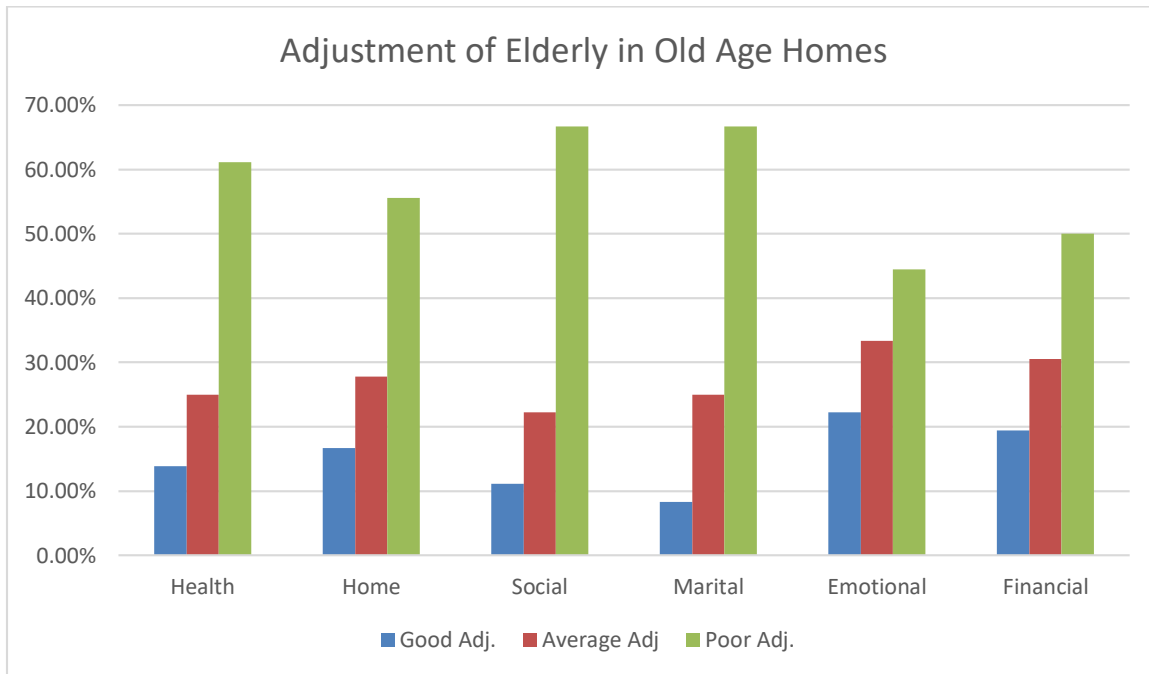
- Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Aging brings with it many health issues. It is evident from the table that elderly living with families have better health than elderly do in old age homes. Home adjustment of elderly in family depends on interpersonal relationships. Due to the generation gap, there is a feeling of being neglected, dependency and shift in their role as the new generation takes up the position they held once.

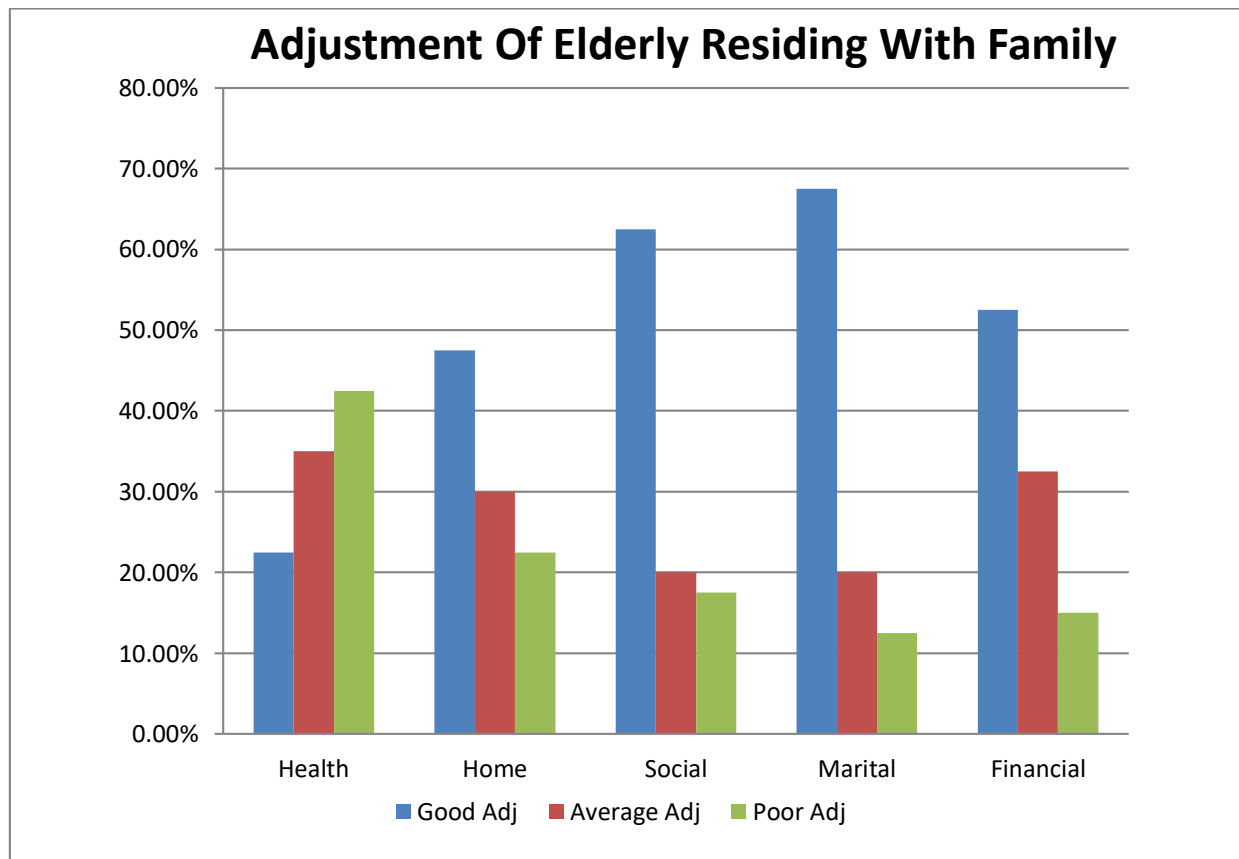
Jayashree and Rao (1990) found that older women whose spouse were living found to be significantly better socially adjusted than the widows are. Social adjustment depends on the living patterns of elderly and their social relationships. Results in the present study show that people living with their families have better adjustments at home. Elderly who are living in the old age homes face more social adjustment problems and they encounter emotional problems. Emotional problems can arise due to the feeling of insecurity and uncertainty.

Elderly living in old age homes do not have any source of income and depend on the meager old age pension and donations given to them by the visitors. Shukla (2008) concluded in the

study that institutionalized males and females have shown poor adjustment towards health, social, emotional, financial, home and marital areas as compared to non- institutionalized aged.



**Figure 1 Areas of Adjustment of elderly residing in old age homes**



**Figure-2 Areas of Adjustment of elderly residing with family**

## Mental Efficiency in Elderly

1. Mental Efficiency: 27.4 % elderly in old age homes had moderate level of mental efficiency. Whereas 48% elderly living with families possess higher mental efficiency.
2. Brain Damage: 64% elderly in old age homes had moderate level brain damage and 43% elderly living with families had brain damage.
3. Perceptual Motor Acuity: 57% of the respondents had higher level of perceptual level of motor acuity.
4. Depression: 75.4% of the elderly suffer from depression.

The psychological components of aging are interconnected with both biological and social processes, making it challenging to separate them distinctly.

### Suggestions:

Staying socially engaged, pursuing hobbies, staying physically active, doing yoga, meditation and engaging in mental exercises can help maintain mental acuity and adjustment to the changes associated with aging.

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