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Mental Health Screening of the Elderly in a Social Nursing Home

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ABSTRACT

Elderly people are a vulnerable group at risk of experiencing physical and mental health disorders due to the aging process, which causes a decline in bodily functions and psychological abilities. Emotional mental disorders in the elderly, such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and dementia, can affect quality of life and the level of independence in carrying out daily activities. Therefore, early detection through mental health screening is an important preventive step to identify the risk of mental disorders from the beginning. This activity aims to determine the emotional mental health condition of the elderly through screening using the Self Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ). The method used was a community service activity with a mental health screening approach involving 34 elderly people at the Panti Sosial Tresna Werdha Budi Luhur Jambi. The implementation was carried out over one day using the SRQ questionnaire consisting of 20 questions with "yes" and "no" answer choices. The screening results showed that most of the elderly were not indicated to experience emotional mental disorders, totaling 26 people (76%), while 8 people (24%) were indicated to experience emotional mental disorders. The majority of respondents were male, totaling 24 people (71%). These results indicate that mental health screening can serve as a preventive effort to increase elderly awareness of the importance of maintaining mental and physical health. In addition, increasing physical activity, religious activities, and relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation can be strategies to prevent and reduce emotional mental disorders in the elderly. Thus, routine mental health screening needs to be carried out as part of elderly healthcare services to improve their quality of life and psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The elderly are a high-risk group, meaning they are more vulnerable to physical and mental illnesses. Common mental health issues affecting the elderly include anxiety, loneliness, dementia, depression, and even suicide (Zainal, 2020). These conditions may occur due to a decline in body system functions, leading to reduced physical activity (Shalahuddin et al., 2021).

The condition of the elderly is also influenced by their mental health. A lack of activities to maintain and enhance cognitive abilities makes them more vulnerable to decline, such as dementia, as well as stress and depression. Aging is a natural process that results in both physical and mental health deterioration.

The aging process presents various challenges in meeting the needs of the elderly, including economic, social, and health issues. Access to essential resources becomes a critical issue, especially when these needs cannot be fulfilled. With increasing age, chronic health conditions may arise, leading to declines in physical, mental, cognitive, and economic functions.

It is estimated that by 2050, 80% of the elderly population growth will occur in developing and low- to middle-income countries, including Indonesia. Since 2020, the number of individuals aged 60 and above has surpassed children under five years old (*Ageing and Health*, 2025). In Indonesia, about 12% of the population was aged ≥ 60 years in 2021, and this is expected to rise to 20% by 2045 (BPS, 2024) (*Population Screening Explained*, 2023).

Screening is a method used to determine whether a person has a higher risk of developing a disease so that early treatment or information can be provided to help them make appropriate decisions (NHS, 2021). Early detection of mental health status is an effective step in preventing mental health problems.

The main benefit of early mental health screening is to detect or determine an individual's risk of experiencing mental disorders such as anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Brea Larios et al., 2022). The earlier the detection, the more effective the treatment provided by psychologists and psychiatrists (Insani et al., 2023). This can prevent complications such as substance abuse or suicidal ideation (Tegegne et al., 2022).

Many people still believe that mental health screening is only necessary for those already experiencing symptoms. This assumption is incorrect because screening can be performed on anyone, even without symptoms (Atas et al., 2023). Early mental health screening is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, both physically and psychologically (Carlson et al., 2023).

Healthcare professionals, especially nurses, play a preventive role by conducting mental health screenings (Shalahuddin et al., 2021). This helps increase public awareness of the importance of routine health check-ups (Latipah et al., 2025).

METHOD

The activity was carried out in several stages. The preparation SRQ questionnaire. The elderly participants were selected based on specific considerations. The activity was carried out through several stages, namely preparing the SRQ questionnaire, determining the elderly participants to become the target audience of the community service program based on several considerations.

The activity was conducted in one day during the morning on a working day at a nursing home with 34 elderly participants. During the implementation stage, participants were guided to complete the SRQ questionnaire consisting of 20 yes/no questions. The elderly participants were cooperative and actively participated in both the screening and questionnaire process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Elderly Characteristics by Gender (n=34)

Category Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	24	71%
Female	10	29%

Based on the distribution table above, it was found that the majority of the elderly were male, totaling 24 people (71%). This is in line with the results of the 2024 National Survey (BPS, 2024), which state that the majority of the elderly population in Indonesia are female, amounting to 52.20%.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Emotional Mental Disorders in the Elderly Using SRQ (Self Reporting Questionnaire) (n=34)

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Indicated Emotional Mental Disorder	8	24%
Not Indicated Emotional Mental Disorder	26	76%
Total	34	100%

Based on the distribution table above, it was found that the majority of elderly individuals were not indicated to have emotional mental disorders, totaling 26 people (76%), while 8 elderly individuals (24%) experienced mental disorders. This is in line with research conducted by (Nurti, 2022), which stated that 43 elderly individuals (58.9%) did not show indications of experiencing emotional mental disorders, with an independence level category of 87.7.

Based on the chi-square test results, a p-value (0.000) was obtained, indicating a significant relationship between emotional mental health and the level of independence of elderly individuals in performing activities of daily living. There is a need to increase daily activities for the elderly in order to improve their emotional mental health. The research results also showed a relationship between mental health screening and the mental health of the elderly. Through preventive activities carried out by conducting physical and mental health screening examinations for the elderly as a way to increase their knowledge, it highlights the importance of maintaining both physical and mental health conditions and adopting a healthy lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

The study found that 24 elderly participants (71%) were male. Based on the SRQ questionnaire results, most 26 elderly individuals (76%) did not experience emotional disorders. There is a need to improve elderly understanding of diseases, symptoms, and prevention through mental health screening. Elderly individuals indicated to have emotional mental disorders should be referred to healthcare facilities for further prevention and psychiatric evaluation by multidisciplinary teams. Preventive efforts include increasing physical activities, participating in religious activities, and practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga or meditation.

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