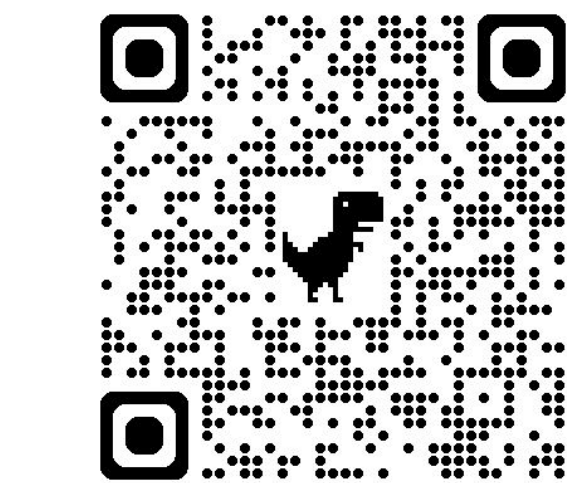


Psychosocial and Cognitive Outcomes Among Expanded Cohort of Forcibly Displaced Older Adults from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)

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BACKGROUND

In 2023, the 120,000 population of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) was forcibly displaced to Armenia, creating an **unprecedented humanitarian crisis and mental health burden** among older adults.

Displacement, trauma, grief, and loss of homeland increase risk for depression, cognitive decline, and complicated grief.

Alzheimer's Care Armenia's (ACA) **Support Café Program** provided a group-based psychosocial intervention including art therapy, music, memory exercises, and social engagement.

Study Objective

To measure emotional well-being and cognitive functioning before and after participation in the ACA Support Café psychosocial intervention.

METHODS

- **2 Site Locations in Urban Centers in Armenia**
 - n=67; Age: 50+
- **Intervention:** 3-month Support Café Program led by team psychologist; included art-based activities, music, memory exercises, and socialization
- **Data Collection:** At baseline and at 3 months post-intervention
- **Outcomes:**
 - **PHQ-9** — depression symptoms
 - **MoCA** — cognitive functioning
 - **BGQ (adapted)** — complicated grief related to loss of homeland
- **Statistical Analysis:** Descriptive Statistics (counts, frequencies)
- **Informed Consent** was obtained from all participants, and ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Avdalbekyan National Institute of Health.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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TABLES

Table 1. Sociodemographics of Forcibly Displaced Artsakh Population

Sociodemographic Variable		Count (%)
Age	50-59	8 (11.9%)
	60-69	30 (44.8%)
	70-79	25 (37.3%)
	80-89	3 (4.5%)
	90-99	1 (1.5%)
Sex	Female	48 (71.6%)
	Male	19 (28.4%)
BMI	Underweight	2 (3.0%)
	Healthy	14 (20.9%)
	Overweight	39 (58.2%)
	Obese	12 (17.2%)
Educational Level	Less than High School	1 (1.5%)
	High School Graduate	41 (61.2%)
	Some College	19 (28.4%)
	Bachelor's Degree	5 (7.5%)
	Master's Degree	1 (1.5%)
Marital Status	Currently Married	36 (53.7%)
	Divorced	2 (3.0%)
	Never Married	6 (9.0%)
	Separated	2 (3.0%)
	Widowed	21 (31.3%)
Post-Displacement	Ararat	19 (28.4%)
Province of Residence in Armenia	Kotayk	1 (1.5%)
	Lori	13 (19.4%)
	Shirak	15 (22.4%)
	Yerevan	19 (28.4%)
Pre-Displacement Province of Residence in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)	Askeran	5 (7.5%)
	Hadrut	4 (6.0%)
	Martakert	6 (9.0%)
	Martuni	6 (9.0%)
	Stepanakert	46 (68.7%)

Table 2. Psychosocial and Cognitive Outcomes of Support Café

Outcome		Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)
Cognitive Status	Normal Cognition	19 (28.4%)	36 (53.7%)
	Mild CI	45 (67.2%)	31 (46.3%)
	Moderate CI	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
	Severe CI	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Depression	No Depression	8 (11.9%)	22 (32.8%)
	Mild	26 (38.8%)	33 (49.3%)
	Moderate	22 (32.8%)	11 (16.4%)
	Moderately Severe	11 (16.4%)	1 (1.5%)
	Severe	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Grief	No Complicated Grief	2 (3.0%)	19 (28.4%)
	Complicated Grief	65 (97.0%)	48 (71.6%)

CI= Cognitive Impairment

RESULTS

- ◆ **Pre-Support Café Intervention**
 - Only 28.4% scored normal cognition on MoCA; **71.7%** had mild or moderate CI
 - **88.0%** reported depression symptoms, with 49.2% moderate to moderately severe
 - Complicated grief symptoms were highly prevalent, with **97.0%** showing possible indicators on the BGQ
- ◆ **Post-Support Café Intervention**
 - **53.7%** of participants scored within the normal MoCA range
 - At follow-up, **67.2%** reported depression symptoms, only 1 moderately severe and 0 severe cases
 - **28.4%** no longer met criteria for complicated grief

CONCLUSION

The Support Café Program may benefit mood and cognitive functioning among forcibly displaced older adults. The **key takeaways** include:

Expanding Psychosocial Programming: Collaborate with humanitarian organizations and local service providers to scale culturally tailored psychosocial interventions that address the needs of displaced older adults.

Prioritizing High-Risk Subgroups: Develop targeted strategies for individuals with high grief and depression burden, who may be responsive to supportive, community-based interventions.

Advancing Longitudinal Research: Conduct long-term studies to evaluate how trauma exposure, and social engagement shape cognitive resilience in forcibly displaced aging populations.

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