



FACTORS AFFECTING DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG OLDEST-OLD ADULTS : FOCUSING ON GENDER DIFFERENCES

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

South Korea is predicted to become a superaged society around 2025. Depression in older adults is a major factor influencing suicide. South Korea exhibits the highest suicide rate among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Therefore, using national data that sampled the entire population of older adults in South Korea, our study aimed to examine the factors influencing depression and suicidal ideation in adults aged 85 years or older according to gender, including their health-related and social characteristics. Our study provides basic data for preparing various interventions and national policies to reduce depression and suicidal ideation in oldest-old adults.

METHOD

This study aimed to examine the factors affecting depression and suicidal ideation among individuals aged 85 years or older, focusing on gender differences. Data were obtained from the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 2017. Overall, 768 individuals aged ≥ 85 years were included in the final analysis. The participants’ general, health-related, and social characteristics were analyzed as factors influencing depression and suicidal ideation.

RESULTS

Among male oldest-old adults, living arrangements and the number of chronic diseases were factors affecting depression, while activities of daily living restrictions and the number of chronic diseases were factors affecting suicidal ideation. Among female oldest-old adults, only the number of chronic diseases affected depression, while financial status and the number of chronic diseases were the factors affecting suicidal ideation.

Table 1. Differences in depression and suicidal ideation of male participants’ characteristics (N = 281)

Variables	Category	Male oldest-old (n =281)						
		Depression			Suicidal ideation			
		Yes (n =9) n (%)	No (n =272) n (%)	X ² , F(p) Scheffe	Yes (n =11) n (%)	No (n =270) n (%)	X ² , F(p) Scheffe	
General characteristics	Education level	Elementary graduation or less	5 (3.5)	136 (96.5)	0.11 (.743)	8 (5.7)	133 (94.3)	1.36 (.243)
		Middle school graduation or higher	4 (2.9)	136 (97.1)		4 (2.9)	136 (97.1)	
	Living arrangement	Living alone	5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)	10.81 (.007)	4 (8.9)	41 (91.1)	3.50 (.082)
		Living with others	4 (1.7)	232 (98.3)		7 (3.0)	228 (97.0)	
	Religion	No	7 (5.4)	122 (94.6)	5.69 (.017)	5 (3.8)	125 (96.2)	0.01 (.956)
		Yes	1 (0.7)	150 (99.3)		6 (4.0)	145 (96.0)	
	Satisfaction with financial status		1.98±0.84	2.02±0.93	0.13 (.899)	1.87±0.78	2.03±0.94	0.56 (.575)
	Health-related characteristics	Admission within a year	No	7 (2.7)	218 (97.3)	0.13 (.720)	10 (4.5)	214 (95.5)
Yes			2 (3.6)	54 (96.4)		1 (1.8)	55 (98.2)	
ADL restriction		No	7 (3.0)	230 (97.0)	0.05 (.820)	5 (2.1)	233 (97.9)	14.04 ($<.001$)
		Yes	1 (2.3)	42 (97.7)		6 (14.3)	36 (85.7)	
IADL restriction		No	2 (1.3)	154 (98.7)	3.15 (.076)	3 (1.9)	153 (98.1)	3.75 (.053)
		Yes	6 (4.8)	118 (95.2)		8 (6.5)	116 (93.5)	
Cognitive function		23.65±4.09	24.05±3.94	-0.29 (.771)	22.08±3.93	24.12±3.93	-1.71 (.088)	
Number of chronic diseases		4.76±2.72	2.58±1.67	2.29 (.053)	2.85±1.54	2.64±1.75	0.41 (.686)	
Health status		1.16±0.69	1.93±1.08	3.14 (.013)	1.26±0.95	1.94±1.07	2.09 (.038)	
Social characteristics	Number of close relatives		0.59±0.98	0.30±0.63	0.87 (.411)	0.80±1.03	0.29±0.62	1.66 (.126)
	Number of close friends		0.39±0.52	0.90±1.48	-2.53 (.027)	0.64±0.66	0.90±1.48	-1.22 (.242)
	Satisfaction with social/leisure/cultural activities		2.12±0.72	2.10±0.93	-0.06 (.949)	1.41±0.98	2.13±0.91	2.61 (.010)
	Satisfaction with friends and local community		1.94±0.86	2.27±0.91	1.00 (.317)	1.64±1.06	2.28±0.90	2.36 (.019)

Table 2. Differences in depression and suicidal ideation of female participants’ characteristics (N = 487)

Variables	Category	Female oldest-old (n = 487)						
		Depression			Suicidal ideation			
		Yes (n = 10) n (%)	No (n = 476) n (%)	X ² , F(p) Scheffe	Yes (n = 24) n (%)	No (n = 463) n (%)	X ² , F(p) Scheffe	
General characteristics	Education level	Elementary graduation or less	10 (2.3)	425 (97.7)	0.03 (.863)	20 (4.6)	414 (95.4)	0.14 (.709)
		Middle school graduation or higher	1 (1.9)	51 (98.1)		3 (5.8)	49 (94.2)	
	Living arrangement	Living alone	5 (2.1)	230 (97.9)	0.01 (0.916)	12 (5.1)	224 (94.9)	0.02 (.877)
		Living with others	5 (2.0)	246 (98.0)		12 (4.8)	239 (95.2)	
	Religion	No	4 (2.3)	167 (97.7)	0.10 (.747)	10 (5.8)	161 (94.2)	0.48 (.490)
		Yes	6 (1.9)	309 (98.1)		14 (4.4)	302 (95.6)	
Health-related characteristics	Satisfaction with financial status		1.94±0.85	1.82±0.89	-0.45 (.655)	1.23±0.86	1.86±0.88	3.38 (.001)
	Admission within a year	No	7 (1.7)	400 (98.3)	3.26 (.071)	19 (4.7)	388 (95.3)	0.02 (.898)
		Yes	4 (5.0)	76 (95.0)		4 (5.0)	76 (95.0)	
	ADL restriction	No	5 (1.5)	336 (98.5)	1.98 (.159)	16 (4.7)	326 (95.3)	0.15 (.696)
		Yes	5 (3.4)	140 (96.6)		8 (5.5)	137 (94.5)	
	IADL restriction	No	1 (0.8)	129 (99.2)	1.78 (.183)	6 (4.6)	124 (95.4)	0.01 (.946)
		Yes	10 (2.8)	347 (97.2)		17 (4.8)	340 (95.2)	
Cognitive function		22.59±4.12	20.47±4.92	1.39 (.165)	22.32±4.61	20.43±4.91	1.82 (.069)	
Social characteristics	Number of chronic diseases		4.65±2.39	3.13±1.80	2.71 (.007)	4.54±2.01	3.09±1.79	3.81 (.001)
	Health status		1.86±1.19	1.62±0.96	-0.80 (.427)	1.16±1.04	1.65±0.96	2.40 (.017)
	Number of close relatives		0.38±0.95	0.37±0.76	0.06 (.952)	0.52±0.94	0.36±0.75	1.01 (.314)
	Number of close friends		1.01±0.94	0.79±1.37	0.54 (.591)	1.41±2.91	0.76±1.23	1.08 (.292)
	Satisfaction with social/leisure/cultural activities		1.97±0.80	2.03±0.82	0.25 (.799)	1.55±0.97	2.06±0.81	2.45 (.022)
	Satisfaction with friends and local community		2.23±1.11	2.22±0.83	-0.05 (.961)	1.81±0.92	2.24±0.83	2.44 (.015)

Table 3. Influencing factors of depression and suicidal ideation

Category	Variables	Male oldest-old						Female oldest-old					
		B	SE	Wald	p	OR	95% CI	B	SE	Wald	p	OR	95% CI
Depression	Intercept	-4.06	0.92	19.49	<.001	0.02	-	-5.29	0.75	50.53	<.001	0.01	-
	Living arrangement (ref = living alone)	-2.06	0.76	7.36	.007	0.13	0.03-0.56	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Number of chronic diseases	0.55	0.18	9.66	.002	1.72	1.22-2.43	0.39	0.15	6.91	.009	1.48	1.10-1.97
Suicidal ideation	Number of chronic diseases	0.39	0.15	6.91	.009	1.48	1.10-1.97	0.35	0.11	10.37	.001	1.42	1.15-1.76
	ADL restriction (ref = no restriction)	2.13	0.63	11.52	.001	8.39	2.46-28.65	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Satisfaction with financial status (ref = not at all satisfied)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.74	0.26	7.99	.005	0.48	0.29-0.80

CONCLUSIONS

The healthcare and welfare services for older adults must be expanded to cater to oldest-old adults who live alone, have activities of daily living restrictions, and have lower financial status. Additionally, the oldest age group’s psychological health must be monitored regularly for depression and suicidal ideation to implement active interventions for this high-risk group.

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