



Reducing Social Isolation and Improving Quality of Life in Older Adults

EDITORIAL

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Welcome to the third issue of the JALTC in 2018. We are already excited to publish the last issue in 2018. In this issue, there are four new articles from different disciplines. Special thanks to all the authors who contributed to this issue.

First, to increase self-care independence among older adults, the importance of the partnership between staff and family caregivers is underlined. Based on qualitative depth interviews with staff, the cohesive collaboration with staff and dealing with negative family caregivers attitudes is mentioned. Caregivers empathy and compassion towards their job is discussed in the study.

Second, a new initiative for older adults about their continuing education is presented. This is the first university for older adults in the world and called "GeroAtlas60+Refresher University". This university for older adults is introduced by "life-long learning" model that helps to gain new skills and competencies in different fields.

Third, whether satisfaction among older adults is affected by the place of residence is questioned. The variables related to satisfaction among older adults living at home and nursing home are discussed in the study. Researchers conducted quantitative research with older adults either living their home or in an institution. Building an enhanced environment (i.e., hobby, social activity, belonging to a house) among older adults living at home is emphasized for home satisfaction. Having personal decision about living in an institution, having a supportive social atmosphere (i.e., having visitors, visiting their family, having a hobby) is emphasized for institutional satisfaction.

Lastly, the quality of community services for older adults is examined. A cross-sectional survey is conducted among older adults living in a big city in Turkey to explore the quality of services in community centers. The higher ratio of participation in sports (i.e., walking) and social activities (i.e., with friends) are mentioned. Based on age and

gender difference, higher sports activities among the 65-74 age group and women participants are also mentioned. The researcher emphasizes that the importance of community centers is mainly for older people living alone.

Those studies aforementioned above reveals the importance of quality of life in old age. The number of older individuals being isolated from society and waiting for the end of life with feelings of hopelessness should not be underestimated. Professionals working with older adults made attempts to deal with those problems that decrease their life quality (WHO, 2017). Those aspects remind us of how a supportive environment can be established for older adults. The answer can be given in twofold. The quality of life of the older people can be enhanced the first by the interventions within the community and the second by the arrangements offered by institutions.

Promoting older adult individuals to communicate effectively with each other and developing intergenerational activities in a society (i.e., older adults-children/adolescents, older adults- younger adults) are some examples of community interventions that will improve the quality of life. Workshops including participants in different age range can be arranged to increase communication between age groups. Those workshops can be conducted between local community centers and institutions. Besides, enhancing to participate in physical activities are essential for dealing with mobility loss problems (WHO, 2017). Regular physical activity not only keeps mental and physical health but also provides to reach socialization access as well as get rid of being inactive in daily life (Chodzko-Zajko et al., 2009).

Besides, familial support is necessary, especially in old age. The older adults who feel isolated and lonely have shorter lives and are at higher risk for dementia. Encouraging older adults to visit their family, relatives, and friends and having purpose-

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ful time with them will improve the quality of life. Older adults visiting their families at the outside of caring institute is related to higher satisfaction in a study (Durak & Senol-Durak, 2018).

Concerning institutional activities, improving the skills of nursing home staff about enhancing communication, arranging social activities within and at the outside of the institution would prevent social isolation among older adults. Those activities would improve the quality of life of older adults.

It is stated that the quality of life of older adults who are suffering from chronic diseases is low. The development of social support systems is an outstanding arrangement. In the societies where primary care is provided mostly by family members, the concepts of responsibility, love, and respect are essential. The social support from family members, friends, staff and significant others has a critical role for older adults who have to cope with chronic mental and physical illnesses.

In most societies, the most comprehensive, the most effective care institution appears to be a family. Strengthening ties between family members and making the family more dynamic and functional will enable older individuals to live a more peaceful and quality life. As mentioned the value of social support in declining cognitive aging (Seeman, Lusignolo, Albert, & Berkman, 2001)

familial support is so important. On the other hand, increasing the number of nursing homes providing safe and clean atmosphere, mental and physical activity opportunities, and developing emotionally sensitive and respectful care are crucial in terms of quality of life of older people.

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