

---

## IMPACT OF CARE-HOMES ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL STATE OF ELDERLY RESIDENTS OF CARE-HOMES IN NIGERIA

**Osakwe-Ogo, Winifred Uju**

Department Of Adult Education, Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka.

---

**ABSTRACT:** *This study aims to determine the impact of care-homes on the psychological and social state of residents of care-homes in Lagos state Nigeria. The design employed for the research was the survey approach and a sample of 150 elderly residents of care homes were selected in 8 care-homes in the State. A validated instrument titled “Questionnaire on the impact of care-homes on the psychological and social state of the elderly” was used to collect the data. Analysis was carried on the data collected employing the t-test. From the results obtained it was established that there is a significant difference between the psychological and social state of aged residents of care-homes and aged individuals residing with their relations. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations were made which include; regular counseling services should be provided for the aged residents in care-homes to help tackle the psychological challenges they face due to the aging, care-givers should assist the aged residents through social services that will aid adjust to the challenges of aging and the operations of the care-home institution, The government must involve itself in the care of the aged in the society by building and providing facilities and subsidizing medications, the government should introduce policies that seek to improve the conditions of the aged in the society such as the effective implementation of the national policy on the aged, non-government organizations and government should organize regular training of care-givers as a strategy to improve the psycho-social status of the residents of these homes.*

**KEYWORDS:** psychological state, social state, elderly, care homes

---

## INTRODUCTION

Every society is dynamic in nature regardless of its level of development and these cuts across its political, economic, educational, technological and cultural dynamics. One of the issues faced by any society today is the fast growing number of elderly persons. This can be attributed to the drop in fertility and mortality rates alongside the increased expectation of life due technological and medical improvements (Adebawale et al., 2012). These improvements in sanitation, nutrition, health and economic wellbeing presents serious implications for developing countries such as Nigeria struggling with socio-economic hardship, widespread poverty and an absence of policies on the care as well as welfare of older persons in the country.

According to a report by the “Population Reference Bureau” it is estimated that the elderly make up 3.1 percent or 5.9 percent of the entire population in Nigeria (Tanyi, Andre & Mbah, 2018). These significant figures have implications on the societal development of the country. Scholars

highlight that streets in Nigeria are littered with elderly one begging for alms, some of them working themselves wearily to meet their ends needs until they die, while some are sent to institutions dedicated for the care of elderly ones. According to Bamidele (2005) welfare institutions are homes created with the specific purpose of accommodating and caring for the aged in the society. In these centers, procedural care which include; feeding, clothing, healthcare and social activities are offered to the elderly. These efforts are aimed at alleviating the plights of the elderly ones in the societies through the provision of economic, societal and mental assistance for those residents in these homes.

Although there is no universally accepted age for the classification for elderly or the old across low, middle as well as high income earning countries, the United Nation defines the elderly as those individuals above the age of 60 years (Animasahun & Chapman, 2017). According to Orimo, Ito, Suzuki, Araki, Hosoi & Sawabe (2006) an aged person is one who has attained the age of 65 years or more. Scholars highlight that in the traditional Nigerian and African society, caring for the elderly is the responsibility of their children and relations with little or no involvement by the Nigerian government or agencies (Onyeabor, 2004; Abbah & Mabo, 2004, Animasahun & Chapman, 2017). The present social and economic dynamics in the Nigerian society today where poverty continues to rise, the AIDS pandemic continues to kill younger generations as well as the cultural shift in the Nigerian society has however, placed serious strains on the traditional arrangement of care-giving for the elders (Angelo, 2003). Another school of thought however argues that family still remain the best option in caring for the elderly in societies as they can provide love and attention to the aged (Reinhard, 2008).

Across Nigeria, there are numerous care-giving centers for the elderly in Nigeria. According to Obadina (2005) most of these institutions for the elderly are managed by churches, non-governmental agencies and communities and are targeted at mostly destitute elderly individuals. According to Adebawale et al (2012) the Nigerian government has rather placed its focus on the health care and primary health care spending billions on the development of these sectors. A visit however, to most of these homes run by these organizations raises questions on the effectiveness of these centers in the social and mental support expected to be provided by these institutions. Residents of these centers, look unkempt, tattered, frustrated and unhealthy and their surrounding environment lacking proper maintenance, poor standard of accommodation, toilet facilities and food to mention but a few (Obadina, 2005).

Scholars highlight that the psychological state of an individual indicates a series of dynamic correlation between social and behavioral factors that impact the overall wellbeing of an individual (Martikainen, Bartley & Lahelma, 2002). According to Animasahun & Chapman (2017) the influence of biological, social and psychological variables on the process of aging can impact the health outcomes of the individual.

Socially however, the social state of an individual indicates multiple correlations that encompass earnings, security, accommodation, health-care that impact the well-being of the aged (Oladeji, 2011). This influences the ability of elderly individuals to be socially active in the society. As such,

for the elderly creating a balance in the social and psychological conditions around them is key to their wellbeing.

According to Echeta & Ezech (2017) Nigeria is the 6<sup>th</sup> worst place for elderly ones in the world as they are no adequate policy provisions that encourage the wellbeing and healthy living of the aged in the society. This has therefore placed Nigeria in a precarious situation where it faces serious obstacles meeting the psychological, material, health and economic demands of the elderly ones because of its economic challenges as well as its approach towards the care and protection of the elderly.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria historically has always revered the “elderly”; in most cultures in the country the elderly ones occupied important positions during deliberations in times of peace and war. However, the present situation of the country’s economy has seen a rise in unemployment, insecurity, corruption, poverty levels and the spread of diseases such as cholera, Syphilis, HIV/AIDS to mention but a few. This has consequential implications on all of sectors of the society particularly the elderly ones.

This situation has seen elderly ones who are living in homes for the elderly faced with abandonment as well as deprivations challenges as a result of poor infrastructures, ill-equipped care homes, inexperienced care givers, financially ill-equipped family relations, deceased relatives, corrupt practices to mention but a few (Dada, 2005). Scholars highlight that has the potential to impact their ability to socialize, their impression of the society, the willingness to take medication, their motor skills as well as increases the risk to psychotic breakdown, heart attacks, strokes etc. (Animasahun & Chapman, 2017).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to determine the extent to which elderly individuals living in care homes in Nigeria experience social and psychological challenges specifically the research sought to determine:

1. The psychological problems experienced by elderly residents of care homes.
2. The social problems experienced by elderly residents of care homes.
3. To provide solutions on how social and psychological challenges been experienced by the elderly ones can be eliminated or minimized.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will bring to the fore, the rising population of the aged in the country, the importance of care homes for the elderly as well as the state of care homes for the elderly in Nigeria. It also highlights the lack of funding and necessary policies encouraging the development of this sector. In addition, the findings of this research will be beneficial to number of organizations, social welfare workers, counselors, policy makers, religious bodies in the society.

## Hypothesis

**Ho1** There is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated psychological problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated psychological problems.

**Ho2** There is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated social problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated social problems.

## Research Design

The study adopted survey approach which was structured to systematically collect data from the population being studied with a view to better comprehending the targeted issue.

### (a) Study Location

The study was carried in the southern part of Nigeria, precisely Lagos State. Lagos State originally known as “Eko” was created in 1967 by the “*State Creation and Transitional Provision Decree No 14 of 1967*”. It is the center of economic activities in the country generating approximately 334 billion naira annually. It lies in the south west part of Nigeria and is bordered by Ogun State in the east and north. It bounded to Republic of Benin on the West and in the south by the Atlantic Ocean.

### (b) Population and sample size

The population of the study of 150 is drawn from aged residents of selected care homes within the Lagos State metropolis namely; Well-Care Home Medicals, Miradora Care Homes, Rock Garden Homes, Alpha Nursing Agency, Winiseph Care Home, Regina Mundi Home, Family Ark Mission and Rosetti Care comprising of male and female residents.

### (c) Instrumentation

The instrument adopted for this research is a questionnaire tagged “Questionnaire on the impact of care-homes on the psychological and social state of the elderly” with a total of 213 questionnaires administered and a test-retest reliability of 0.73. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of the care-givers. The returned questionnaires were subsequently analyzed.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### Hypothesis 1:

There is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated psychological problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated psychological problems.

Table 1: t-test of difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated psychological problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated psychological problems.

	Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t	sig	Decision
Psychological Problems	Aged residents	20	61.3500	10.946	85	3.506	.001	Rejected
	Aged non-residents	67	55.1642	5.221				

Table 1 indicates that there is significant difference between the views of elderly residents of care homes towards psychological challenges than elderly individuals who reside with family. Hence, the  $t=3.506$ ,  $p=.001$  at 0.05 level of significance. The hypotheses which suggests that, there is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes and elderly individuals residing at home in their perception of the designated psychological problems is rejected.

## Hypothesis 2

There is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated social problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated social problems.

Table 2: t-test of difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes and elderly individuals residing at home in their perception of the designated social problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated social problems.

	Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig	Decision
Social Problems	Aged residents	63	62.683	9.381	148	2.661	.009	Rejected
	Aged non-residents	87	58.931	7.846				

Table 2 indicates that there is significant difference between the views of elderly residents of care homes towards social challenges than elderly residents residing at homes. Hence,  $t=2.661$ ,  $p=.009$  at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The elderly in Nigeria face numerous challenges in the society, such motor inability, speech and hearing impairment, cognitive degradation, refusal by children to training, organ malfunction such as liver disease to mention but a few which, if they do not have surviving relations or lack independent abilities will require the assistance of another individual this therefore brings to the

fore the care-home for the elderly. The results for the study indicate that; Hypotheses 1 which states that “There is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated psychological problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated psychological problems” was rejected and thus there is a significant difference between the perceptions of aged residents of care-homes and aged individuals who are not residents of care homes. This discovery by the study agrees with the work of Panday et al (2015) on elderly people living in aged homes and those living in the usual domestic setup. According to him, elderly individuals that reside at home are more likely to be attached to devotional and community activities than those living in care-homes. According to Brown (1983) elderly individuals usually have the feeling of isolation and dependency and loneliness. According to Reinhard et al (2008) families and relations of elderly tend to be more caring to their elderly ones thereby aiding in the psychological state of elderly ones. The findings of the study also agrees with the proposition of Abbah & Mabo (2004) the traditional African culture expects the elderly to be taken care of by the younger generations and in those homes most of these residents are left to fend for their selves these consequently impacts their emotional and mental state of mind.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significance difference between the responses of elderly residents of care homes in their perception of the designated social problems and the responses of those residing with their relations in their perception of the designated social problems was rejected therefore the study deduced that there is a significant difference between the perception of aged residents of care-homes in their perception of the designated social challenges and others residing at home. This view point aligns with the proposition of Obadina (2005) who highlights that aged individuals are challenged by their inability to socialize, communicate and ensure their moral ethics are upheld. In addition, the discovery of the study agrees with the proposition by Oladeji (2011) who highlights that the accommodation, earnings and health-care of an individual impacts the wellbeing of an individual. According to Soini & Vlimki (2002) majority of the care homes lack basic recreational amenities.

Socially however, the social state of an individual indicates multiple correlations that encompass earnings, security, accommodation, health-care that impact the well-being of the aged (Oladeji, 2011).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The spike in the population of aged individuals is increasingly becoming an issue that will impact national development in the future. The spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola has reduced the population of budding youths in societies while poverty, lack of government participation, insecurity, national disasters continues to impact the population responsible for care-given of the aged. Over-whelming therefore, the existing opportunities and strategies in place for health, physical and mental care of the elderly.

The study which sort to investigate care-homes and its impact on the psychological and social state of mind of the aged in the society establishes that the psychological state and development of aged



individuals that reside in care homes are more affected when compared with aged individuals that reside with their relations and this can be attributed to lack of funding of this care-homes, no counseling services, incompetent personnel, inadequate medical care, no government policies targeting this population and corruption. It also establishes from hypotheses two which sort to investigate the impact of care-homes on the social state of the aged that aged residents of care-homes are more impacted socially than those who reside with their relations this can be correlated to the feeling of loneliness, loss of dignity and respect, resentment and abandonment that see them refuse to attend social functions, develop health challenges, participate in sports activities and communicate with others to mention a few. The research therefore, raised awareness on the need to address the caring of aged individuals as well as the training of personnel dedicated to these tasks.

### **Recommendations**

A number of recommendations were made based on the discoveries of the research which include;

- Regular counseling services should be provided for the aged residents in care-homes to help tackle the psychological challenges they face due to the aging.
- More emotional support should be provided to the elderly residents in care-homes.
- Care-givers should assist the aged residents through social services that will aid adjust to the challenges of aging and the operations of the care-home institution.
- The government must involve itself in the care of the aged in the society by building and providing facilities and subsidizing medications.
- The government should introduce policies that seek to improve the conditions of the aged in the society such as the effective implementation of the national policy on the aged.
- Non-government organizations and government should organize regular training of care-givers as a strategy to improve the psycho-social status of the residents of these homes.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study has a number of limitations such as:

- Language barrier and poor vision made data collection for this study challenging.
- The research could not cover all the care-homes in the country.
- Questionnaire method of data collection was the only approach employed to collate data.

### **REFERENCES**

- Abbah, T. & Mabo, A. (2004), August,1). No one cares for the aged. Sunday Punch, pp3-4.
- Adebowale, S. A., & Atte, O. (2012). Elderly well-being in a rural community in North Central Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa. *Public Health Research*, 2(4), 92-101.
- Angelo, V. (2003). HIV/AIDS, population and sustainable development. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, (4), 99-120.
- Animasahun, V. J., & Chapman, H. J. (2017). Psychosocial health challenges of the elderly in Nigeria: a narrative review. *African health sciences*, 17(2), 575-583.

- Bamidele, S.N. (2005). The old in a depressed economy. BBC News/World/Africa. 429421.
- Bromely D.B. (1978). The Psychology of human ageing. Hermonds: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Dada, C.L. (2005). Is it ever enough to die of old age? Age and Ageing 32 (5), 484-486.
- Echeta, U. F., & Ezech, E. I. (2017). The Igbo care for the elderly in contemporary times: an old testament evaluation. *International Journal of Development and Management Review*, 12(1), 140-151.
- Martikainen, P., Bartley, M., & Lahelma, E. (2002). Psychosocial determinants of health in social epidemiology.
- Obadina, E. (2005). Bosom of the family. *New Internationalist*, (264), 16-17.
- Orimo, H., Ito, H., Suzuki, T., Araki, A., Hosoi, T., & Sawabe, M. (2006). Reviewing the definition of “elderly”. *Geriatrics & gerontology international*, 6(3), 149-158.
- Oladeji, D. (2011). Family care, social services, and living arrangements factors influencing psychosocial well-being of elderly from selected households in Ibadan, Nigeria. *Education Research International*, 2011.
- Reinhard, S. C., Given, B., Petlick, N. H., & Bemis, A. (2008). Supporting family caregivers in providing care. In *Patient safety and quality: An evidence-based handbook for nurses*. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US).
- Sijuwade, P. O. (2008). Adjustment of the elderly in relation to living arrangement, gender and family life satisfaction. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 6, 602-605.
- Soini, H., & Vlimki, M. (2002). Challenges faced by employees in the home care of elderly people. *British journal of nursing*, 11(2), 100-110.
- Tanyi, P. L., André, P., & Mbah, P. (2018). Care of the elderly in Nigeria: Implications for policy. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1555201.