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## EFFECTS OF HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF OLDER PERSONS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL RELATIONSHIP STUDY

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### Abstract

The global population of older adults is increasing, with Nigeria experiencing a similar trend, yet health support services remain inadequate, particularly in urban areas across Nigeria. This study examined the relationship between health support services and the psychological well-being of older persons in Lagos State, Nigeria. Using Ryff's multidimensional paradigm, the six dimensions of psychological well-being autonomy, environmental mastery, personal development, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance were examined. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 400 older persons (65 years of age and older). Data was collected using a standardized questionnaire that assessed access to critical health support services, such as advocacy, mobility assistance, medication management, nutrition, medical social services, emotional support, and respite care. Multiple regression analysis was implemented to identify the factors that most significantly predicted psychological well-being. Findings from the study showed that psychological well-being was significantly influenced by access to healthcare, mobility assistance, and emotional support. Emotional support proved to be the most significant factor, emphasising the necessity of social and emotional support to older persons' psychological well-being. Other services, such as medication management and nutrition, exhibited moderate but significant influence. The study concluded that the accessibility and availability of comprehensive health support services significantly influence the psychological well-being of older persons. Based on these findings, the study recommends that policymakers, particularly those in government and healthcare organizations, prioritize the development of healthcare systems that are accessible and appropriate for the older population, as well as mobility infrastructure and emotional support.

**Keywords:** Health support services, Psychological well-being, Access to healthcare, Medication management, Nutritional support, Mobility assistance

## Introduction

The global increase in the population of older adults has significant implications for health support systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria. Advances in medicine and public health have contributed to increased life expectancy, leading to a demographic shift that necessitates rethinking how societies care for their ageing populations. In Nigeria, and particularly in urban centres such as Lagos, the growing number of older persons presents both opportunities and challenges for the health and social care system (Chukwukere, 2025).

Despite this demographic transition, Nigeria's health system remains under-resourced and inadequately prepared to meet the needs of an ageing population. Geriatric care is limited in scope, and the psychosocial dimensions of ageing are often overlooked. In cities like Lagos, older adults frequently face structural challenges, including poor access to age-appropriate healthcare, weak social support systems, and socio-economic insecurity. These conditions are worsened by urban poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and the gradual decline of traditional family-based care, all of which contribute to the increased vulnerability of older persons.

These structural and systemic barriers are not only harmful to physical health of older persons but may also affect their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being (PWB) is a multidimensional construct that reflects an individual's overall mental and emotional health. According to Ryff's (1989) theoretical model, PWB includes autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These components are essential for older persons as they navigate life transitions such as retirement, physical decline, and social isolation. Access to reliable health support services—including medical care, mental health services, and community-based programmes—can help older persons maintain these psychological capacities and promote resilience, independence, and dignity in later life.

Preliminary observations suggest that many older persons encounter difficulties in accessing consistent and coordinated health support services. However, empirical evidence on how these limitations impact psychological well-being remains scarce. The lack of data on this relationship presents a significant gap in gerontology and adult education research thereby limiting the ability of policymakers, healthcare providers, and social workers to design effective, age-sensitive interventions for older persons. Therefore, this study examined the relationship

between health support services and the psychological well-being of older persons in Lagos in order to identify service gaps and inform policy responses that promote healthy and dignified ageing.

### **Research Objective**

This study aims to examine the predictive relationship between health support services and the psychological well-being of older persons in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study investigates how various dimensions of health support services—such as emotional support, nutritional services, mobility assistance, access to healthcare, and advocacy—predict psychological well-being outcomes based on Ryff’s multidimensional model.

### **Research Questions**

Two research questions guided the study. They include-

1. To what extent do health support services predict the psychological well-being of older persons in Lagos?
2. Which components of health support services significantly contribute to the psychological well-being of older persons?

### **Research hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study

1.  $H_0$ : Health support services do not significantly predict psychological well-being among older persons in Lagos.
2.  $H_0$ : The components of health support services (access to healthcare, family support, and community-based services) differ significantly in their relative contributions to the psychological well-being of older persons.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to investigate the effect of health support services on the psychological well-being of older persons in Lagos. The population comprised elderly individuals aged 65 and above living across all twenty (20)

Local Government Areas in Lagos State. A total of 400 participants were chosen for the study via a multi-stage sampling method. Initially, five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Lagos were randomly chosen. In the second step, two electoral wards within each selected Local Government Area were deliberately picked based on the prevalence of a high concentration of older persons. In the final stage, individual participants were selected using systematic random sampling.

Data were gathered via a standardized questionnaire consisting of three sections: Section A: Demographic information of participants (age, gender, education, etc.) Section B: Health support services (independent variable), assessed using subscales including access to healthcare, emotional support, Nutritional support services, mobility help, and advocacy.

Section C: Psychological well-being (dependent variable) is assessed using Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (1989), which encompasses six domains: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. All scale questions were assessed using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

The tool underwent face and content validity assessment by three specialists in gerontology Adult Education and psychology. A pilot study was conducted with 30 older persons in a non-sampled local government area. Cronbach's alpha scores for each subscale varied from 0.72 to 0.89, signifying adequate internal consistency.

Trained research assistants conducted the questions in person, employing interviewer-assisted techniques for individuals who were illiterate or visually impaired. Ethical issues, including informed consent and confidentiality, were upheld.

Data were processed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were employed to summarize demographic and variable distributions. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to evaluate the study questions and hypotheses, with significance established at  $p < .05$ .

## **Results**

A standard multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the extent to which components of health support services predicted psychological well-being among older persons in Lagos. The independent variables included emotional support, nutritional support, mobility

assistance, access to healthcare/medication, and advocacy/resource navigation. The dependent variable was psychological well-being, measured using Ryff's multidimensional model.

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1. The psychological well-being (PWB) score was moderately high ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ), with emotional support showing the highest mean among the predictors. A Pearson correlation analysis (Table 2) revealed that psychological well-being was positively and significantly correlated with all five components of health support services, with the strongest correlations observed for emotional support ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and access to healthcare ( $r = .49$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 1**

**Descriptive Statistics for Key Study Variables (N = 367)**

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max
Psychological Well-being	3.62	0.54	2.10	4.85
Emotional Support	3.87	0.58	2.00	5.00
Nutritional Support	3.42	0.61	1.85	4.90
Mobility Assistance	3.33	0.67	1.70	4.90
Access to Healthcare	3.65	0.56	2.00	5.00
Advocacy/Resource Navigation	3.15	0.69	1.60	4.80

**Table 2**

**Pearson Correlations between Health Support Services and Psychological Well-being**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological Well-being	—					
2. Emotional Support	.58**	—				
3. Nutritional Support	.40	.42	—			
4. Mobility Assistance	.35	.39	.30	—		
5. Access to Healthcare	.49**	.44	.37	.33	—	
6. Advocacy/Resource Navigation	.31	.36	.29	.30	.34	—

### Multiple Regression Analysis

A standard multiple linear regression was performed to examine whether components of health support services significantly predicted psychological well-being among older adults in Lagos.

The overall regression model was statistically significant,  $F(5, 361) = 50.24$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining

approximately 41% of the variance in psychological well-being ( $R^2 = .41$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .40$ ).

ANOVA and summary of regression models are shown in Tables 3 below.

**Table 3**

**ANOVA Summary Table for Regression Model**

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Regression	58.62	5	11.72	50.24	< .001
Residual	84.14	361	0.233		
Total	142.76	366			

$R^2 = .410$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .40$

### Relative Contribution Analysis

The relative regression results revealed that emotional support was the strongest predictor of psychological well-being ( $\beta = .42$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed by access to healthcare ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and nutritional support ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Mobility assistance approached statistical significance ( $\beta = .10$ ,  $p = .052$ ), while advocacy/resource navigation was not a significant predictor ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p = .162$ ). The findings suggest that while all components contribute to well-being to some extent, emotional and medical-related supports are the most impactful. These results underscore the importance of emotionally enriching environments and accessible medical care in promoting healthy psychological outcomes among the elderly. Relative contribution of health support services on psychological well-being of older persons shown in table 4 below

**Table 4**

**Regression Coefficients Predicting Psychological Well-being (N = 367)**

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Emotional Support	0.42	0.05	.42	8.10	< .001
Nutritional Support	0.20	0.06	.18	3.45	.001
Mobility Assistance	0.10	0.05	.10	1.95	.052
Access to Healthcare	0.28	0.06	.25	4.90	< .001
Advocacy/Resource Navigation	0.07	0.05	.07	1.40	.162
Constant	1.45	0.25	—	5.80	< .001

### Discussion of findings

This study examined the effect of health support services on the psychological well-being of older persons in Lagos. The findings indicate that certain elements of health assistance exert a more significant influence on psychological well-being than others. Emotional support appeared as the primary predictor. This underscores the importance of interpersonal interactions, companionship, and social activity in promoting mental stability and alleviating psychological discomfort in the elderly. In Nigeria, research has shown that emotional intimacy from family and community substantially alleviates feelings of loneliness and sadness in the elderly. Faronbi, Eromosele and Fawole (2025) emphasized that emotional support is positively associated with reduced depression scores in older adults in Oyo State, whereas Ebimgbo et al. (2021) highlighted the significance of emotional and spiritual support in fostering resilience among older persons in Southeastern Nigeria.

Access to healthcare services significantly influenced the prediction of psychological well-being. Older individuals with enhanced access to medical services, medication oversight, and consistent care typically exhibit less anxiety and more autonomy. Research in Nigeria indicates that restricted access to geriatric-specific healthcare services exacerbates insecurity, helplessness, and diminishes self-efficacy in older persons. Omosefe and Erinfolami (2023) established that limited healthcare access correlates with increased psychological susceptibility in senior people, particularly in metropolitan low-income regions. Moreover, inadequate understanding of health systems and the lack of age-appropriate treatments hinder older individuals' capacity to traverse care settings with assurance, eventually impacting their psychological well-being.

Nutritional assistance was recognised as a significant factor in psychological well-being. A balanced diet protects physical health and enhances cognitive clarity, emotional stability, and energy levels, all of which are associated with mental wellness in later age. Research conducted in Nigeria by Olabisi et al. (2022) revealed that older persons who received consistent food assistance from family members or religious organizations had elevated levels of optimism and participation in everyday activities. Nutritional neglect is frequently linked to apathy, exhaustion, and depressed symptoms, especially in metropolitan areas where food instability is common.

Mobility aid, while favorably correlated with psychological well-being, exerted a somewhat diminished impact. This may indicate obstacles such as inadequate transit systems, hazardous



pathways, and an overall deficiency of elder-friendly infrastructure in urban areas like Lagos. Although mobility support is theoretically associated with greater autonomy and engagement among older adults, actual constraints may hinder its efficacy. Akosile et al. (2021) observed that despite the availability of mobility assistance, many older persons—particularly those in assisted-living settings—continue to experience limited physical activity and reduced quality of life, largely due to fear of falling and underlying functional limitations. Further, Akosile et al. (2023) emphasized that environmental factors such as poor neighborhood safety and restricted physical spaces can severely limit the effectiveness of mobility interventions. These findings highlight that the success of mobility support is not solely dependent on its provision but also on the contextual realities in which older adults live. This is also in tune with research global stage as Sá et al. (2024) found that infrastructural limitations in transport and housing significantly reduce mobility and well-being among older adults thereby diminishing their effect on psychological well-being.

Ultimately, advocacy and resource navigation services did not substantially forecast psychological well-being in this study. This may indicate that these services are either underused or inadequately executed within the local environment. Notwithstanding the creation of entities such as the National Senior Citizens Centre, several older persons continue to be oblivious about their rights and the assistance accessible to them. Ilesanmi and Adebayo (2023) noted that the policy frameworks for senior care in Nigeria are still in nascent phases and lack effective outreach channels, thus accounting for the absence of demonstrable psychological benefits from advocacy services for older individuals in Lagos.

Collectively, these results confirm that the emotional and social aspects of health support services are particularly vital for the psychological well-being of older individuals, subsequently followed by access to important health and nutritional resources. Structural support services, albeit beneficial, require additional enhancement and recognition to increase their effectiveness. These results underscore the pressing necessity for integrative, community-oriented eldercare initiatives in Nigeria that emphasize relational, health, and nutritional support as fundamental components of ageing well-being.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the effect of several components of health support services on the psychological well-being of older individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that emotional support, access to healthcare, and nutritional services are the most significant

determinants of psychological well-being among the elderly. Emotional support, in particular, plays a key role in minimizing feelings of isolation and improving self-worth, while access to dependable healthcare and proper nourishment adds to overall mental and emotional stability. Conversely, mobility support and advocacy services, although available, exhibited comparatively lesser or non-significant impacts on psychological well-being. The findings highlight a need for enhanced implementation and accessibility of these programmes, especially in metropolitan settings like Lagos where older adults may confront infrastructural and informational impediments.

### **Recommendations**

1. NGOs, faith-based groups, and community leaders should establish companionship programmes and peer-support groups to reduce loneliness and promote emotional well-being among older persons in their communities.
2. The Ministry of Health and Lagos State Primary Health Care Board should establish geriatric units in all public health facilities and train healthcare providers in elder-specific care.
3. State and local government social welfare departments should provide regular nutrition packages and collaborate with community kitchens to ensure food security for older persons.
4. Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, as well as their counterpart in the Ministry of Transportation, should ensure that public spaces include ramps, safe walkways, accessible transport, and elder-friendly road crossings to support the mobility and independence of older persons.
5. Health agencies and elder care institutions in Lagos should conduct targeted awareness campaigns and establish help desks to inform older persons about their rights and available support services.

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