

The relationship between religion/spirituality and the general psychological well-being of the elderly institutionalised population in the Eastern Cape, South Africa - Anathi Ntozini - University of Pretoria, South Africa

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Short Communication

ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being has a number of known benefits and is important for the quality of life of the elderly in particular. South Africa can be considered a religious country, with the majority of citizens identifying with some religious orientation. The elderly are considered to be a particularly religious segment of the population. This article reports on a quantitative exploratory study undertaken to ascertain whether a correlation exists between psychological well-being and religiosity/spirituality in the elderly institutionalised population of South Africa. The General Psychological Well-Being Scale and ASPIRES were administered to a convenience sample of 336 elderly in the Eastern Cape Province. A significant but weak positive correlation was found between the variables of psychological well-being and religiosity, which supports the findings of a body of studies undertaken from the positive psychology perspective.

METHOD:

The study used a non-experimental quantitative research design.

Participants:

The study population consisted of elderly residents in elderly institutions in Buffalo City Metropolitan area, South Africa and the local surrounding areas. The elderly population of this area is estimated to be 6% of the total population (Statistics South Africa, 2011b). According to the Department of Social Development (2013), the number of elderly people resident in institutional settings in Buffalo City is 2,438. The sample was obtained using nonprobability convenience sampling, which makes use of volunteers to participate in a study. This mode of sampling was seen to be appropriate as the particular characteristics of this population (e.g. cognitive impairments, which are often a major reason for institutionalisation) made randomised sampling unsuitable.