



Elders' General Self-efficacy and Its Affecting Factors in Iran

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Self-efficacy is defined as the degree of a person's feelings about his/her ability to perform desired functions. On the other hand, self-efficacy is the level of one's confidence to exhibit an appropriate behavior in particular situations and expect the desired results (1). Self-efficacy is particularly important in elders as it has been shown to influence different aspects of elders' life such as their life quality, physical activities, daily life tasks and self-care skills, as well as their successful adaptation to home-nursing (2).

Considering the rapid growth of elders' population and their physical and psychological needs, the current study investigated their general self-efficacy and its affecting factors in west Tehran, Iran, in 2010.

This cross-sectional, correlation analytical survey was conducted on elders living with their families in west Tehran, Iran, between 28 July and 30 November 2010. This research studied elders' general self-efficacy and its correlation with individual confounding variables such as age, gender, education, marital status and family type.

Participants of the study included one hundred elders who had the inclusion criteria, namely aged 60 or above, living and not suffering from any acute or chronic disabling mental or physical disorders (such as blindness, deafness and cogni-

tive disorders, etc.), and had provided their written informed consent. This research was approved by the Ethical Committee of Tehran University of Medical Sciences and was conducted according to the principles of Helsinki Declarations.

Considering the confidence interval of 95% and test power of 80%, the required sample size was calculated by the following formula: During multi-stage sampling, eighteen areas of west Tehran were defined and then six districts were selected randomly. A two-part, self-reporting questionnaire was used for data gathering. For illiterate elders, the questionnaire was filled out through interviews. The first part of the questionnaire contained questions about demographic characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, marital status and family type. The second part was the standardized general self-efficacy scale (GSE-10) which consisted of 10 items.

The study findings showed that $\mu \pm SD$ of participants were 70.6 ± 6.34 years old, within the range of 60 to 86 years. 47% of elders were female and 100% of elders had high self-efficacy. As per the findings of the study, consistent with those obtained by Heltsrom et al. (4), self-efficacy was negatively associated with age. Sohrabi et al. (3) reported that aging causes greater cognitive and psychological disorders and less physical function-

ing, and increases dependency in daily activities that can affect self-efficacy. It seems that self-efficacy should be strengthened in order to reduce the negative impacts of aging.

Findings of present study suggests that the level of education is completely associated with general self-efficacy; that is, illiterate elders had the lowest score and those with diploma had higher levels of self-efficacy ($P=0.001$). These findings are consistent with those obtained by Smaeli *et al.* and Rambod *et al.* (5, 6).

Results of Anova test indicated a correlation between elders' general self-efficacy and their family type ($P=0.001$). Results of Sheffe test proved that self-efficacy of elders who were living with their spouse (43.34 ± 2.9) were significantly higher than that of elders living with their children (30.15 ± 2.5), brothers or sisters (32.22 ± 3.07). It seems that the supportive role of husbands or wives is a very important factor. In addition, linear regression analysis indicated that male elders showed a greater general self-efficacy ($P=0.001$, $B=1.90$). Thus, women require more attention.

The findings of the present study determined that individual factors are associated with elders' self-efficacy. Thus, these should be taken into consideration in educational programs. Health care professionals should support the elderly people in special situations by providing appropriate education, and improving their self-efficacy. Further detailed studies in this context are recommended for assessing the causes of lower self-efficacy in women.

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