AfroGlobal Perspectives
Vol. 3 No. 9 (2026): September 2026
https://doi.org/10.70572/agp.v3i9.114
Original Article

Psychological needs of the elderly reported by their healthcare workers: A study on Bakateyamba Home, Nalukolongo, Kampala City. A cross-sectional study.

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ABSTRACT

Background:

The Nigerian national system faces similar challenges in preparing a national framework that can maximise coverage for citizens amid psychological and demographic changes in the ageing population. The study aims to identify the psychological needs of the elderly reported by their healthcare workers: A study on Bakateyamba Home, Nalukolongo, Kampala City.

Methodology:

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using quantitative methods. Participants included health workers and management staff at the home. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analysed using Microsoft Word and Excel.

Results:

majority of the respondents, 30(86%) were certificate holders, followed by 4(11%) who were diploma holders while the minority, 1(3%) had UACE level of qualification. The majority of the health workers, 12(48%), disagreed that the elderly at home were supported by their families. Most of the health workers 12(48%) agreed that the elderly at the home were worried about their health problems. The majority of the health workers, 10(40%), strongly agreed that the elderly at the home were worried about their financial problems. Most of the health workers, 11(44%), strongly agreed that the elderly at home were stressed about being dependents. The majority of the health workers, 17(68%), agreed that homesickness was a common psychological challenge. Most of the health workers, 13(52%), were neutral about psychotic depression being a common psychological challenge among the elderly at home. The majority of the health workers, 14(56%), agreed that anxiety was a common psychological challenge among the elderly at the home. Most of the health workers, 10(40%), disagreed that the elderly under their care were comfortable being at Bakateyamba home.

Conclusion:

Worry about their health, financial stress, homesickness, and anxiety were the most pronounced psychological needs of the elderly.

Recommendations:

Health workers should encourage elderly residents to participate in decisions about their own care whenever possible.

Keywords: Psychological needs, the elderly, Healthcare workers, Bakateyamba Home.
Submitted: *October 23, 2024* ***Accepted:*** *March 12, 2025* ***Published:*** *September 25, 2026*
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Background

The current situation and challenges in psychosocial health status in the elderly in Nigeria found that four primary factors affect the psychosocial health status of elderly Nigerians, namely: changes in family dynamics such as lack of family support, increased worry of the demand for healthcare services, increased economic stress, and decreased functional independence (Boland et al, 2017). Like other developing countries, the Nigerian national system faces similar challenges in preparing a national framework that can maximise coverage for citizens amid psychological and demographic changes in the ageing population. There should be more focus on the educational system, health services, community-based initiatives, local or regional policies, and national strategies. The current framework in Nigeria can be modified to prepare for changing demographics in ageing (Animasahun, 2017).

The elderly face psychological problems since they do not live with their family (Akbar, A, 2021). They became emotionally very week ah develop home sickness, experience mental disorders associated with old age, and older people are susceptible to psychotic depressions (Akbar, A, 2021). The two major psychotic disorders of older people are senile dementia and psychosis with cerebral arteriosclerosis. It has been observed in this study that these two disorders account for approximately 80 per cent of the psychotic disorders among older people in civilised societies.

One in four elderly individuals has a risk of depression, one in three is at risk of anxiety, and eight out of ten have cognitive impairment, mainly mild (Arango et al, 2016). Therefore, the health status of the elderly persons was more affected by mental than physical health risks. Older adults commonly experience depression and anxiety, yet are under-represented in psychological treatment services (John & Pilling, 2021). They experienced better outcomes from psychological treatments than working-age adults (John & Pilling, 2021). Given the deleterious effects if mental health conditions go untreated, increasing access to psychological

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therapies for older people should be an international priority such as attending day care services designed for people with dementia since it has positive impact on the daily lives of people with dementia because this service contributes to the enhancement of activities and social support, prevents isolation, and enhances practical and cognitive functioning as experienced by the users (Strandenæs et al, 2018).
Community studies will be needed to establish the true prevalence of elder abuse. Some of the elderly residents experience abuse prior to their residence in old age homes. Abuse and neglect have been distinguished depending on whether or not there has been an active violation of rights or an absence of action. Many elders struggle with the decision to remain at home or to move to an alternative location of care (Boland et al, 2017). A person's location of care can influence health and well-being. Healthcare organisations and policy makers are increasingly challenged to better support the elderly's dwelling and health care needs. The study aims to identify the psychological needs of the elderly reported by their healthcare workers: A study on Bakateyamba Home, Nalukolongo, Kampala City.

METHODOLOGY

Study design and rationale
In this study, a descriptive cross-sectional study design, which utilised quantitative methods of data collection, was utilised. This research study design was preferred because it was less time-consuming, and in addition, the researcher collected data at once without following up with respondents.

Study setting and rationale
The study was carried out at Bakateyamba Home of the Elderly, Lubaga Division, Kampala City.

Study population
The study targeted two populations. All health workers at the home providing health care services to the elderly persons, and the management team of the home.

Sample size determination
A census was used to collect data from the two populations.

Inclusion Criteria
The study included healthcare workers and the management team of the Home who were available during the data collection periods and willing to voluntarily consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria
The healthcare workers and the management team of the Home who didn't consent freely were excluded.

Definition of variables
The independent variables included: wellness needs.
The dependent variables included: Wellness of the elderly.

Research Instruments
The data was collected from respondents using a questionnaire with closed-ended questions in simple English. The instrument was chosen because it was time-saving.

Data collection procedures
The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher to each respondent after they had consented, and was filled out immediately or followed up accordingly. The questionnaire was then collected and checked there and then for completeness.

Data management
In the process of data collection, each questionnaire, after being filled out, was checked for completeness and accuracy before leaving the area of study. Filled questionnaires were kept properly in a locker for confidentiality and safety.

Data analysis
The data collected was analysed by entering it into the computer using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel, where the data was represented in tables.

Ethical considerations
An introductory letter was obtained from the Dean, Faculty of Social Science & Psychology, University of Kisubi. This letter was presented to the management of Bakateyamba Home, Nalukolongo, seeking permission to carry out the study. Participants received an explanation of what the study was about in simple and easy language that can be understood by everyone before enrollment, and only those willing participate consented, and anyone who opted to pull out of the study was free to do so. Participants were not forced to participate in the study, which is a fundamental principle of voluntary participation in research ethics. Confidentiality was ensured during the course of the study by respondents using serial numbers instead of names, and questionnaires were kept in a locked cupboard, and the key was kept by the researcher.

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RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Summarises the demographic characteristics of the respondents n=35

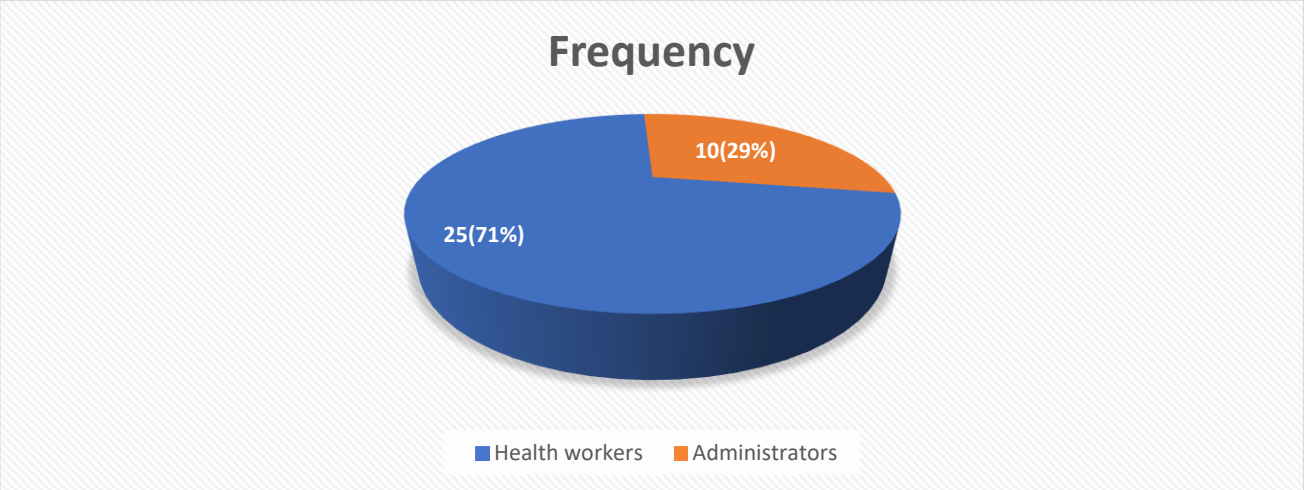
Variables	Category	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Age	Health workers		
	20-29 years	24	96
	30-39 years	0	0
	40-59 years	0	0
	Above 59 years	1	4
	Administrators		
	20-29 years	2	20
	30-39 years	4	40
	40-59 years	2	20
	Above 59 years	2	20
Gender	Health workers		
	Male	6	24
	Female	19	76
	Administrators		
	Male	2	20
	Female	8	80
Level of qualification	Certificate	30	86
	Diploma	4	11
	Degree	0	0
	UACE	1	3
Religious affiliation	Catholic	19	54
	Protestant	8	23
	Moslem	2	6
	Born-again	4	11
	SDA	2	6

(Source: primary data, 2025)

In terms of age, majority of the health workers, 24(96%) were aged between 20-29 years while the minority, 1(4%) was aged above 59 years then majority of the administrators, 4(40%) were aged between 30-39 years and the rest had the same distribution, 2(20%) among all ages. In regard to gender, most of the health workers, 19(76%), were females, while the least, 6(24%), were males, and for the administrators, the majority, 8(80%), were females, while the minority, 2(20%), were males. In terms of level of qualification, the majority of the respondents, 30(86%), were certificate holders, followed by 4(11%) who were diploma holders, while the minority, 1(3%), had a UACE level of qualification. In regard to religion, the majority of the respondents, 19(54%), were Catholics, followed by 8(23%) who were protestants, 4(11%) were born-again, and the same distribution, 296%, among the Muslims and the SDA.

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https://doi.org/10.70572/agp.v3i9.114
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Figure 2: Showing the cadre of the respondents n=35



From the figure above, the majority of the respondents, 25(71%), were health workers, while the minority, 10(29%), were administrators.

Psychological needs of the elderly reported by their healthcare workers

Table 2 shows the psychological needs of the elderly reported by their healthcare workers. n=25

S/N	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The elderly at this Home are well supported by their families	5(20%)	12(48%)	7(28%)	1(4%)	
2	The elderly at this Home are worried about their health problems	1(4%)	4(16%)	2(8%)	12(48%)	6(24%)
3	The elderly at this Home are worried about their financial problems.		4(16%)	6(24%)	5(20%)	10(40%)
4	The elderly at this Home are stressed about being dependents.		3(12%)	5(20%)	5(20%)	11(44%)
5	Home sickness is a common psychological challenge among the elderly at this Home.				17(68%)	8(32%)
6	Psychotic depression is a common psychological challenge among the elderly at this Home.		2(8%)	13(52%)	4(16%)	6(24%)
7	Anxiety is a common psychological challenge among the elderly at this Home.				14(56)	11(44%)
8	The elderly at this Home complain of being mistreated by their families before		6(24%)	5(20%)	10(40%)	4(16%)
9	The elderly under your care are comfortable being at this Home.		10(40%)	3(12%)	6(24%)	6(24%)

(Source: primary data, 2025)

Table 2: The majority of the health workers, 12(48%), disagreed that the elderly at home were supported by their families, 7(28%) were neutral, 5(20%) strongly disagreed, while the minority, 1(4%), agreed with it.\
Most of the health workers, 12(48%), agreed that the elderly at the home worried about their health problems, 2(24%) strongly agreed, 4(16%) disagreed, 2(8%) were neutral, while the least, 1(4%), strongly disagreed with it.
The majority of the health workers, 10(40%), strongly agreed that the elderly at the home were worried about their financial problems, 6(24%) were neutral, 5(20%) agreed, while the minority, 4(16%) disagreed with it.
Most of the health workers, 11(44%), strongly agreed that the elderly at the home were stressed about being dependents; the distribution was the same, 5(20%) for those who agreed and those who were neutral, while the least, 3(12%) disagreed with it.
The majority of the health workers, 17(68%), agreed that homesickness was a common psychological challenge

among the elderly at Bakateyamba home, while the minority, 8(32%), strongly agreed with it.
Most of the health workers, 13(52%), were neutral about psychotic depression being a common psychological challenge among the elderly at home, 6(24%) strongly agreed, 4(16%) agreed, while the least, 2(8%) disagreed with it.
The majority of the health workers, 14(56%), agreed that anxiety was a common psychological challenge among the elderly at the home, while the minority, 11(44%), strongly agreed with it.
Most of the health workers, 10(40%), disagreed that the elderly under their care were comfortable being at Bakateyamba home; the distribution was the same, 6(24%) for those who strongly agreed and those who agreed, while the least, 3(12%), were neutral.

DISCUSSION

Psychological needs of the elderly reported by their healthcare workers

The majority of the health workers, 12(48%), disagreed that the elderly at home were supported by their families. This might indicate a lack of involvement from family members in the lives of the elderly residents, which could be due to geographical distance, lack of awareness, financial constraints, or social stigma associated with placing elderly relatives in care homes. The findings aligned with the study in Nigeria, which highlighted that lack of family support was among the psychological challenges faced by the elderly (Wilson, 2015).
Most of the health workers, 12(48%), agreed that the elderly at the home were worried about their health problems. This reflects a common concern among older adults as they may experience multiple health issues, which can lead to anxiety about their well-being and fears of worsening health conditions, especially if they are living away from family support. This agreed with the study in Nigeria, which indicated that the elderly experienced persistent worry about their health and the demand for health care services (Wilson,2015).
The majority of the health workers, 10(40%), strongly agreed that the elderly at the home were worried about their financial problems. This highlights the significant concern that financial insecurity is a common stressor among elderly residents, as many elderly individuals may rely on fixed pensions, social security, or limited financial resources, which may lead to worries about affording healthcare, daily living expenses, or future financial stability. Previous studies have revealed that the elderly experienced economic stress as a major psychological burden (Wilson,2015). Most of the health workers, 11(44%), strongly agreed that the elderly at home were stressed about being dependents. This reflects a common psychological challenge for many older adults, as the loss of independence and the need for assistance with daily activities can lead to feelings of frustration, helplessness, and anxiety, especially for those who have been used to living independently earlier in life. The majority of the health workers, 17(68%), agreed that homesickness was a common psychological challenge among the elderly at Bakateyamba home. This suggests that many elderly residents at Bakateyamba home feel a sense of longing or loss for their homes, families, or past lives, as they may feel disconnected from their previous lives and familiar surroundings. The results aligned with the study done by Akbar, A. (2021), which indicated that homesickness was a common psychological challenge faced by the elderly since they were not living with their families.
Most of the health workers, 13(52%), were neutral about psychotic depression being a common psychological challenge among the elderly at home. This reflects a lack of clear evidence or recognition of this specific condition among the elderly at Bakateyamba home, as it may not be as prevalent or may not be properly diagnosed in this setting. This disagreed with the study done by Akbar, A. (2021), which noted that psychotic depression was a common challenge faced by the elderly as a result of not living with their families.
The majority of the health workers, 14(56%), agreed that anxiety was a common psychological challenge among the elderly at the home. This could be due to health concerns, social isolation, loss of independence, or fear of death, making it a common condition in elderly care facilities. This corresponds with the study done by John & Pilling (2021), which highlighted that anxiety was a common psychological issue elderly people faced as a result of isolation. Most of the health workers, 10(40%), disagreed that the elderly under their care were comfortable being at Bakateyamba home. suggests that residents may still be struggling with feelings of discomfort based on personal preferences, the quality of care, emotional attachment to their previous living conditions, dependency issues, and financial worries.

Conclusion

Worry about their health, financial stress, homesickness, and anxiety were the most pronounced psychological needs of the elderly.

Limitations of the study

Lack of co-operation by the respondents.
Time constraints.

Recommendations

To ensure the delivery of high-quality care, administrators should prioritise ongoing training and skills development for caregivers. This should focus on the latest care techniques, geriatric health management, mental health support, and effective communication skills to better address the diverse needs of elderly residents.

To the Health Workers

Health workers should foster better communication with the families of elderly residents. Regular updates on health and well-being, as well as involving families in care planning, can improve overall care quality and ensure that residents feel connected to their families.
Health workers should encourage elderly residents to participate in decisions about their own care whenever possible. This can improve residents' sense of control, dignity, and well-being, fostering a more person-centred care environment.

Acknowledgement
I express my deepest gratitude to the Almighty God for enabling me to accomplish this work.
I sincerely appreciate my supervisor, Mr. Kimera Donatus, for the time he has given to guiding my research process, which has produced this report. My sincere gratitude to my friends and classmates for the academic support given during the development of my research report.
May God richly bless them all.

List of abbreviations
UACE: Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education
SDA: Seventh day adventist

Source of funding
The study was not funded.

Conflict of interest
The author did not declare any conflict of interest.

Data availability
Data is available upon request.

Author contribution
Jane Frances Namuddu collected data and drafted the manuscript of the study.
Donatus Kimera supervised the study.

Author biography
Jane Frances Namuddu is a student of a Bachelor of Counselling Psychology at the University of Kisubi.
Donatus Kimera is a supervisor at the University of Kisubi.

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AfroGlobal Perspectives
Vol. 3 No. 9 (2026): September 2026
https://doi.org/10.70572/agp.v3i9.114
Original Article

PUBLISHER DETAILS

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