

Gender difference in quality of life after controlling for related factors among Korean elderly

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Purpose : As a sequel to the former analysis of the quality of life(QoL) among the young- and the old-old in Korea, this research was aimed to identify factors related to the quality of life and the gender difference after controlling for the related factors among Korean elderly.

Methods : Selected elderly data of 1,339 subjects from the 5th Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted in 2010 was analyzed. In this survey, QoL was measured using Euro Quality of Life (EQ-5D) instrument. Data were analyzed using complex survey data analysis on IBM-SPSS 20.0. The related factors were identified using general linear models with backward elimination. The gender difference was tested also using general linear models.

Results : The distributions of educational level, family income level, and presence of cohabitant were different between male and female elderly in both young- and old-old age group. So were the health behaviors and perceived health, and experience of stress, depression, and suicidal thoughts. QoL and its subscales- mobility, self care, daily living, pain and discomfort, and anxiety and depression- were consistently better among male elderly regardless of age group. Among the variables considered, education, family income level, presence of cohabitant, perceived health, age group and BMI were found to be related to the QoL at $p=.05$, and presence of chronic diseases at $p=.10$. The difference in QoL between male and female elderly after controlling for the variables was statistically significant.

Conclusion : Improving QoL is particularly important for the elderly. In order to improve QoL of the elderly, age- and gender- differences need to be considered when developing services and programs for the elderly.

Keywords : Elderly, Gender difference, Quality of life, Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey