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DETERMINATION OF THE PERCEIVED LEVEL OF LONELINESS AMONG THE ELDERLY RESIDENTS OF A SPECIFIC REGION

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Introduction: While loneliness could be relevant to all age groups, loneliness particularly represents a problem among the elderly people. Loneliness may also play a role in the etiology of physical and mental health problems in the elderly. It may psychologically affect the level of happiness and well-being of the individuals.

Objective: The present study was conducted to find out the perceived level of loneliness among the elderly people.

Methods: The participants in this descriptive, cross-sectional study were 110 volunteer elderly individuals aged 65 years and above, who resided in Gazi Mağusa Maraş region. Introductory Information Form, which included questions to obtain background information on the elderly individuals, and Loneliness Scale for the Elderly were used to collect data. Statistical analyses were performed using t-test and one-sided variance analysis.

Results: Introductory information collected from the elderly individuals showed that 58.2% of them were in 65-74 years age group, 61% were illiterate, 69.1% had lower income than their expenses, and 63% were married. Mean total score of the loneliness scale for the elderly was 12.45 ± 4.48 (minimum-maximum; 0-22), which indicated that elderly individuals were in an acceptable level of loneliness. Total scores of loneliness scale for the elderly did not significantly differ based on the elderly individuals' introductory information.

Conclusion: In light of findings, the present study suggested that the elderly people were in an acceptable level of loneliness. Since there are a limited number of field studies that investigated loneliness among the elderly, which remained under-researched, we recommend that more comprehensive studies should be carried out

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