

## **Improving Quality of Life of Older Adults through a Health Promotion Intervention in a Rural Village in Puttalam District**

WAGK Munasinghe<sup>1</sup>, ATP Gomas<sup>1</sup>, WDSP Rashmika<sup>1</sup>, MPKW Abhayasinghe<sup>1#</sup>, and GND Guruge<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

<sup>#</sup>mpkw.abhayasinghe@kdu.ac.lk

Positive ageing optimizes health, participation, and security to enhance Quality of Life (QOL) as people age. This allows older adults to engage in society according to their capacities with appropriate support. This study aimed to assess the QOL before and after a health promotion intervention to improve positive ageing among older adults in Galmuruwa, a rural village in Puttalam District. The study was in two phases. A survey of 100 older adults conducted using the WHO QOL Assessment (WHOQOL-BREF) questionnaire, administered before and after a four-month health promotion intervention. The community-based health promotion intervention was conducted during the second phase with a purposively selected group of older adults, along with their family members, including adolescents and caregivers. Determinants of positive ageing were identified, activities to promote positive ageing and QoL were designed and implemented over four months, progress was monitored and evaluated daily, and actions were modified based on the observations. Data collection methods included checklists, group discussions, researchers' observations, reflective journals, and monitoring tools like calendars and charts. Data analysis utilized simple descriptive statistics and qualitative thematic analysis. Among 100 participants, 69 were female and 31 were male, with 61 aged 60-69, 30 aged 70-79, and 9 aged 80 and above. Ninety-one percent had one or more non-communicable diseases but demonstrated a low level of awareness regarding the management of such conditions. Four themes emerged in line with the health promotion process and outcomes of the intervention; 1-Overcoming doubt, raising awareness, and igniting enthusiasm, 2-Initiating the actions, 3-Follow up, sustaining and channelling towards optimal effectiveness and 4-Dreams come true upon awakening. Findings imply that the intervention significantly improved QoL of older adults across physical, psychological, spiritual, and environmental health domains. Before the intervention, only 17% rated good QoL, 60% reported moderate to severe pain. Post intervention 54% rated good QoL and pain levels reduced to 29%. Initial findings indicated a sedentary lifestyle, unhappiness, loneliness, less interpersonal interactions and hopelessness, all of which improved following the intervention. A significant improvement noted in awareness in management of non-communicable disease management and prevention, physical activity levels, community interactions

and perceived happiness. The health promotion initiative yielded significant positive outcomes in improving QoL of older adults and their families. Utilizing participatory approaches in conjunction with health promotion strategies effectively fosters healthy lifestyle practices among lay communities.

**Keywords:** *older adults, positive ageing, health promotion intervention, quality of life*