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OP 1

An Exploration of Experiences of Elderly People Living in Sahana Elderly Care Home in Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, Sri Lanka

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Background: The demand for the elderly care homes in Sri Lanka is rising because the elderly population is seeking an alternative care arrangement in the absence of home-based care. Moving to an elderly care home can give different experiences for an elderly person.

Objectives: The main objective of this study was to explore the experiences of elderly people living in elderly care home in Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte. The specific objectives were to explore the physical, psychosocial and environmental experiences of elderly people living in elderly care homes.

Methodology: A qualitative phenomenological design was utilized for the study. Data were collected from an elderly care home located in Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte by using semi structured interviews and a topic guide. By the completion of 15th elderly person, data saturation was achieved. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The ethical approval was granted from the Ethical Review Committee of National Hospital Sri Lanka.

Results: Perception in everyday life as a matter, being separated from the family and being concerned with poor consideration for personal care are the three main themes emerged from this study. Monotonous life style, accepting the situation, maintaining independence, and struggling with aging body were the main physical experiences of elderly people. Moreover, the study identified psychosocial experiences including feeling of abandon, maintaining harmony in relationships, and living with a hope. Finally, coping with available facilities, maintaining a clean environment and concerning on safety of elderly people were identified as environmental experiences.

Conclusions: Findings could contribute elderly people to improve their living conditions by considering their choices when planning menus and activities, implement activities which will promote independence. It is further recommended to provide standard training program to care givers who are working in elderly care homes and it is needed to make policies to improve home setting and life experiences of elderly people.

Keywords: *Elderly care home, Elderly people, Experiences*