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## ENHANCING SELF-CARE CAPABILITIES AMONG A GROUP OF ELDERLY HOME RESIDENTS In Gharbiya Governorate, Egypt

The number of persons aged 65 years and older is growing steadily all over the globe. Aging results in certain physiological changes that increase the probability of health problems. Elderly physical problems are manifested by decline in daily living activities, malnutrition, and incontinence. However many of these problems can be prevented or lessened through using simple nursing interventions. The aims of the study were to: Assess daily living problems of the elderly home residents, assess their baseline daily living activities (DLA), identify factors affecting DLA; enhance DLA to solve daily living problems (DLP) among participants. The study was implemented in three phases: Phase one was a training phase for research assistants. Phase two was the baseline assessment phase. In phase three the nursing intervention, follow-up and evaluation was implemented. The results of the study showed that the nursing intervention was successful in enhancing self-care capabilities of elderly and solved the problems of incontinence among females especially with mild cases. Problems of nutrition were not completely solved because it requires different approach. The study has implications for nursing practice, research and education.

### INTRODUCTION

There is a universal agreement that the number of persons aged 65 years and older is growing steadily. Lashley (1995), reported that those over the age of 65 represented 12.4% of the American population and it is projected to reach 13% by the year 2000. In England the over 75 years old constituted 13% of the total population, and will reach 17.6 by the year 2000, and those 65 years are expected to be increase by 29 % and those 85 and older will increase by 122%. In Egypt the CAPMAS (1986) documented that persons 65 years old were 6.2% (3.6 millions) of the total population in 1976 and reached 6.4 % (4.2 millions) in 1986. Also, by the year 2000 those who are 70 years old will reach 2.6 millions compared to 1.9 during the 1980s.

Aging is a normal physiological and developmental process. However, old people are exposed to different changes that make them prone to be ill easily. There is a common myths about elderly as being fragile, senile, unhealthy, unhappy and lack interest in life. Infact, 80% of elderly live a healthy life and can engage in normal activities if motivated and apply simple exercises (Lashley 1995). Abbasi & Rudmen (1994) mentioned that absence of teeth or faulty dentures might lead to nutritional problems. Lehmann (1991b) concludes that the rise in the prevalence of undernutrition coupled with ageism is increasingly attributed to

the coexisting disability and adverse social and economic factors. Decreased physical functional ability, nutritional problems, and problems of incontinence places elderly at great risk for accident, immobility, dependency and psychological stress (Lashley, 1995).

Enhancing self-care capabilities of elderly requires implementation of innovative nursing interventions aimed at meeting the care deficit of this population and encourages them to function independently (Orem, 1985).

### AIMS OF THE STUDY:

1. Assessing daily living problems (DLP) of the elderly nursing home residents.
2. Assessing their baseline daily living activities (DLA).
3. Identify factors affecting DLA
4. Enhance DLA to solve DLP among participants.
5. Evaluate the success of a nursing intervention in enhancing DLA among participants.

### MATERIALS:

**Design:** The study utilized a one-group pre-post-test experimental design.