DETERMINANT OF LONELINESS AMONG ELDERLY IN MALAYSIA

Adzmel Mahmud[1*], Rohana Jani[2] and Raudhatul Mahfuzah Shafiai[3]

[1]Mr., National Population and Family Development Board, Malaysia, adzmel@lppkn.gov.my
[2]Associate Prof. Dr., University of Malaya, Malaysia, rohanaj@um.edu.my
[3]Mdm., National Population and Family Development Board, Malaysia, raudhatul@lppkn.gov.my
*Corresponding Author

Abstract

Elderly in Malaysia are defined as people aged 60 years and above as agreed on subsequent to the United Nations World Assembly on Ageing in 1982 in Vienna. As of 2014, there is an estimated of 2.7 million elderly in Malaysia or 8.9% out of the total population of 30.3 million. Recent projections estimated that Malaysia will become an ageing nation by 2035 when 15% of the population falls into this group. As the number of the elderly population continues to grow, loneliness is becoming one of the major issues leading to impaired quality of life among elderly. Loneliness might lead to mental problems and stress among the elderly. This study attempts to examine the characteristics and influencing factors of loneliness among elderly in Malaysia. Data for this study is a sub-sample of a bigger national study gathered through the Fifth Malaysian Population and Family Survey (MPFS-5) conducted in 2014 by the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia. Descriptive analysis and Logistic Regression were employed to identify the determinants that associated with loneliness. In addition, the prevalence and incidence rates of loneliness and odds ratio were also calculated. The feeling of loneliness was the main dependent variable for this study. Whilst socio-demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, age, education, marital status, employment status and locality were selected as the independent variables. Other independent variables considered in the analysis were income security, living arrangements, health and physical condition, family interaction and support, leisure activities, community engagement, religious participation, life satisfaction and internet usage. Majority of the elderly reported they "never feeling lonely" (65%). One out of 10 reported feeling lonely sometimes and 25% described themselves as always lonely. The socio-demographic variables, health and physical conditions, religious participation, community engagement, leisure activities and family interaction and support for the elderly affect their feeling of loneliness.

Keywords: Elderly, ageing nation, loneliness, logistic regression, community engagement