

## **Psychoeducational counseling and emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies at the 'San Camilo' subcenter, year 2020**

**Assessoria psicoeducacional e adaptação emocional de familiares de idosos no subcentro 'San Camilo', ano 2020**

**Consejería psicoeducativa y adaptación emocional de familiares de personas mayores en el subcentro 'San Camilo', año 2020**

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### **Abstract**

This paper addresses aging in the third age as an ongoing developmental process and underscores the importance of considering e as active elderlies members of society, with new roles and contributions. It emphasizes that emotional balance during this stage is crucial, and Psychoeducational counseling is presented as a vital tool to assist individuals in confronting and accepting the challenges of aging. A mixed-method approach was employed, utilizing an inductive-deductive and exploratory methodology. Survey results reveal that a significant proportion of relatives of elderlies report that their loved ones struggle to accept their current situation. This underscores the need to cultivate a positive attitude toward old age and promote the idea that it is a natural phase of life. Psychoeducational counseling programs emerge as an effective solution to enhance the emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies These programs not only offer psychological support but also contribute to the ongoing inclusion of elderlies in society and in their own final stage of life. This highlights the importance of addressing aging as a process of growth and development during the third age, where Psychoeducational counseling plays a pivotal role in supporting elderlies and their families in their emotional adjustment and acceptance of this life stage.

**Keywords:** Inclusion; Elderlies; Family psychology.

### **Resumo**

Este artigo aborda o envelhecimento na terceira idade como um processo de desenvolvimento contínuo e sublinha a importância de considerar os idosos como membros ativos da sociedade, com novos papéis e contribuições. Enfatiza que o equilíbrio emocional nesta fase é fundamental, e o aconselhamento psicoeducacional se apresenta como uma ferramenta vital para auxiliar os indivíduos no enfrentamento e aceitação dos desafios do envelhecimento. Foi empregada uma abordagem de método misto, utilizando uma metodologia indutiva-dedutiva e exploratória. Os resultados da pesquisa revelam que uma proporção significativa de familiares de idosos relata que os seus entes queridos têm dificuldade em aceitar a sua situação atual. Isto sublinha a necessidade de cultivar uma atitude positiva em relação à velhice e promover a ideia de que é uma fase natural da vida. Os programas de aconselhamento psicoeducacional surgem como uma solução eficaz para melhorar a adaptação emocional dos familiares dos idosos. Estes programas não só oferecem apoio psicológico, mas também contribuem para a inclusão contínua dos idosos na

sociedade e na sua própria fase final de vida. Isto realça a importância de abordar o envelhecimento como um processo de crescimento e desenvolvimento durante a terceira idade, onde o aconselhamento psicoeducacional desempenha um papel fundamental no apoio aos idosos e às suas famílias no seu ajustamento emocional e aceitação desta fase da vida.

**Palavras-chave:** Inclusão; Idosos; Psicologia familiar.

### Resumen

Este artículo aborda el envejecimiento en la tercera edad como un proceso de desarrollo continuo y subraya la importancia de considerar a los ancianos como miembros activos de la sociedad, con nuevos roles y contribuciones. Se enfatiza que el equilibrio emocional durante esta etapa es crucial y el asesoramiento psicoeducativo se presenta como una herramienta vital para ayudar a las personas a enfrentar y aceptar los desafíos del envejecimiento. Se empleó un enfoque mixto, utilizando una metodología inductiva-deductiva y exploratoria. Los resultados de la encuesta revelan que una proporción significativa de familiares de personas mayores afirman que a sus seres queridos les cuesta aceptar su situación actual. Esto subraya la necesidad de cultivar una actitud positiva hacia la vejez y promover la idea de que es una fase natural de la vida. Los programas de asesoramiento psicoeducativo surgen como una solución eficaz para mejorar la adaptación emocional de los familiares de personas mayores. Estos programas no sólo ofrecen apoyo psicológico sino que también contribuyen a la inclusión continua de las personas mayores en la sociedad y en su propia etapa final de vida. Esto resalta la importancia de abordar el envejecimiento como un proceso de crecimiento y desarrollo durante la tercera edad, donde el asesoramiento psicoeducativo juega un papel fundamental para apoyar a los adultos mayores y sus familias en su adaptación emocional y aceptación de esta etapa de la vida.

**Palabras clave:** Inclusión; Personas mayores; Psicología familiar.

## 1. Introduction

The care and attention to elderlies have become a matter of growing importance in contemporary society due to the aging of the population, which poses new challenges both at the individual and societal levels. In this context, geriatric care and assistance subcenters, such as the "San Camilo" Subcenter, play a crucial role in providing assistance to this segment of the population. However, we must not overlook the emotional and psychological well-being of the relatives of elderlies, who face specific adjustments and challenges when caring for and accompanying their loved ones in this stage of life (Castro et al., 2010).

The growth of the over-60 age group, along with changes in the epidemiological patterns of older adults focused on chronic and degenerative issues, is causing an increasing number of people worldwide to experience aging and require care and attention from others (Marante, 2019).

From a broader perspective, Psychoeducational counseling emerges as a comprehensive strategy to address the emotional and cognitive needs of relatives of elderlies at the "San Camilo" Subcenter. On a macro level, healthcare systems and social services must recognize the importance of providing psychological and educational support to this population. This involves the implementation of programs and resources that address the concerns of family members, such as stress, anxiety, guilt, and adaptation to the physical and emotional changes that elderlies experience.

On a more specific level, it is essential to establish a collaborative approach among mental health professionals, social workers, and gerontology experts at the meso level. These professionals can design psychoeducational interventions tailored to the individual and collective needs of family members (Albarrán & Macías, 2007). This may include group sessions to encourage the exchange of experiences and coping strategies, as well as individual counseling sessions to address more personal and specific concerns.

At the micro level, the emotional adaptation of family members becomes the central focus. Individuals who care for elderlies often experience a range of complex emotions, from love and gratitude to frustration and sadness. Micro-level Psychoeducational counseling focuses on providing these family members with tools to understand and manage their emotions, establish healthy boundaries, identify support resources, and develop effective coping strategies (Board of Directors of the Entrepreneurship Foundation, 2003). This can significantly contribute to improving the quality of life for family members and, ultimately, influence the relationship they have with the elderlies in their care. Given the importance outlined in the preceding

paragraphs and based on the accumulated experience during the past year of professional practice, this research is proposed on the application of Psychoeducational counseling to improve the emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies at the "San Camilo" subcenter. There is a clear need to address this issue and find effective solutions to enhance the quality of life for elderlies and their families.

Furthermore, this research contributes practically to the issue of family abandonment of elderlies. The results obtained can be used to design intervention plans that significantly reduce abandonment in this potentially vulnerable population (Contreras & Suárez, 2014). Therefore, the direct beneficiaries of this research will be the elderlies followed by their families and all individuals or institutions that have direct or indirect contact with the issue presented here.

In summary, aging is a natural process that should be approached with sensitivity and adequate support. Psychoeducational counseling emerges as a fundamental tool to improve the quality of life for elderlies and their families, promoting healthy emotional adaptation in this stage of life.

During adolescence, individuals often identify with restlessness and rebellion as they challenge established rules in their quest to change the world in their own way, while their bodies go through the process of identifying and maturing their sexuality. During youth, one's personality develops, and by the end of this stage, individuals often achieve personal and social stability. Moving on to the next stage, which is maturity, individuals begin to live with the foundations of their past, including family and a sense of personal peace. During the third and final stage of human life, known as old age, individuals start to experience the physical effects of aging, beginning with a loss of agility, changes in their hair, and a decline in many of their physical and intellectual abilities (Delgado, 2012).

Family abandonment of elderly individuals is a problem that has been evident throughout history. elderlies have often been regarded as mere objects who are no longer useful, leading to a dishonorable attitude toward them, treating them as if they have passed their productive years and are no longer needed by the family. The abandonment of an elderlies is not an isolated act but involves a variety of biopsychosocial factors. This is a global issue, influenced by the circumstances of the individuals involved (Erazo, 2012).

One potential cause of family abandonment is the ignorance prevalent in societies, where there is a prevailing image and stereotype that devalues individuals who enter the later stages of life. Worse yet, they may face physical, psychological, and even sexual violence. This is because there is a widespread perception that such individuals are "vulnerable" groups (Fresán et al., 2001).

Negative statements or expressions from people have turned this issue into a problem and led to its "easy" resolution through the abandonment of these individuals. This process can alter the behaviors that facilitate proper social interaction and, in many cases, these behaviors are adopted as societal norms (González et al., 2011). During the later stages of life, it is challenging for elderlies to experience a sense of resolution. Certain events during this developmental phase often hinder it. A clear example is retirement and the subsequent economic positions that come with it, often resulting in minimal income during this stage.

Since the individual views aging as a psychosocial deterioration, both elderlies and those who interact with them follow an assigned role, perpetuating this image. The social climate in which the elderly live has a significant impact on their behavior, influencing various aspects of their environment (Guzmán, 2003).

The stage of old age is considered a period in which a person perceives a variety of changes. These changes are influenced by the lifestyle and quality of life they have had throughout their existence, as well as the social and family systems in which they have been involved, impacting various aspects of their daily life (Jara, 2007). In human life, distinct stages are well-defined during development. Childhood is the first stage, where the initial contact with the world and society occurs, and individuals receive fundamental teachings for personal development (Máiquez & Capote, 2001).

In fact, families of individuals using permanent housing resources should continue to be regarded as caregiving families. In other words, these families should not cease to play their caregiving role but should exercise it from a different position, complementing the professional and specialized care provided by the facility (Ministry of Health, 2011).

Within the context of family abandonment of elderlies, notable aspects can be identified that contribute to an understanding of why many individuals have diminished their capacity for social interaction, especially their behavior. The majority of them end up living on the streets, exposing themselves to situations of risk that significantly distort their intellectual abilities, thought processes, behavior, and emotional sphere, leading to a degradation in their self-perception (World Health Organization, 2004).

Given the above, it becomes essential to research the implications that Psychoeducational counseling would have within the aforementioned population. Failure to do so could result in countless consequences, exacerbating already existing abnormal behaviors and leading to more severe conditions within the population (Rosales, 1997). It should also be considered that during the life process that elderlies go through, significant changes occur in their psychological and physical structure. While their personality tends to be more stable, their emotional area is not, making them psychologically vulnerable when they haven't undergone an adequate adaptation process to this new stage.

The objective of this article is to examine the emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies within the context of geriatric care, with a specific focus on promoting inclusion and addressing psychological well-being. The study aims to underscore the importance of recognizing aging as a continuous process of growth and development, where elderlies play active roles in society. It seeks to demonstrate the value of Psychoeducational counseling as a vital tool to help individuals, particularly family members, confront and accept the challenges associated with aging

## 2. Methodology

Given that you are addressing a complex topic that involves emotional and psychological aspects, a mixed methodology that combines both qualitative and quantitative research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation. Here is a possible strategy:

**In-Depth Interviews:** Conduct in-depth interviews with relatives of elderlies from the "San Camilo" Subcenter. These interviews will allow you to explore the experiences, emotions, challenges, and adaptation strategies that relatives face. This will provide rich and detailed information about their perspectives.

**Focus Groups:** Organize focus groups with family members to encourage discussion among them and explore common themes. This could help identify patterns of adaptation and potential areas where Psychoeducational counseling is needed. **Questionnaires:** Design questionnaires that measure key variables related to the emotional adaptation of family members. Questions about stress levels, satisfaction, quality of life, etc., could provide quantitative data that complements the qualitative perspectives.

For the interviews and focus groups, use a content analysis approach to identify emerging themes and patterns. This will allow you to gain in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of family members. Analyze the quantitative data using appropriate statistical tools to obtain a numerical understanding of the variables studied. This may involve descriptive analysis and relevant statistical tests.

The population is the group of individuals living in a specific area where the research is conducted. In this research, the study population was defined as all the relatives of elderlies at the "San Camilo" Subcenter. A population of 134 family members was considered, which facilitated the study and research by applying the following formula.

The methodology of this research is based on a mixed approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Following the guidelines of Creswell (2017), in-depth interviews and focus groups were designed to collect qualitative data on

the experiences and perspectives of relatives of older adults. These qualitative techniques allowed for a detailed exploration of emotional challenges and adaptation strategies.

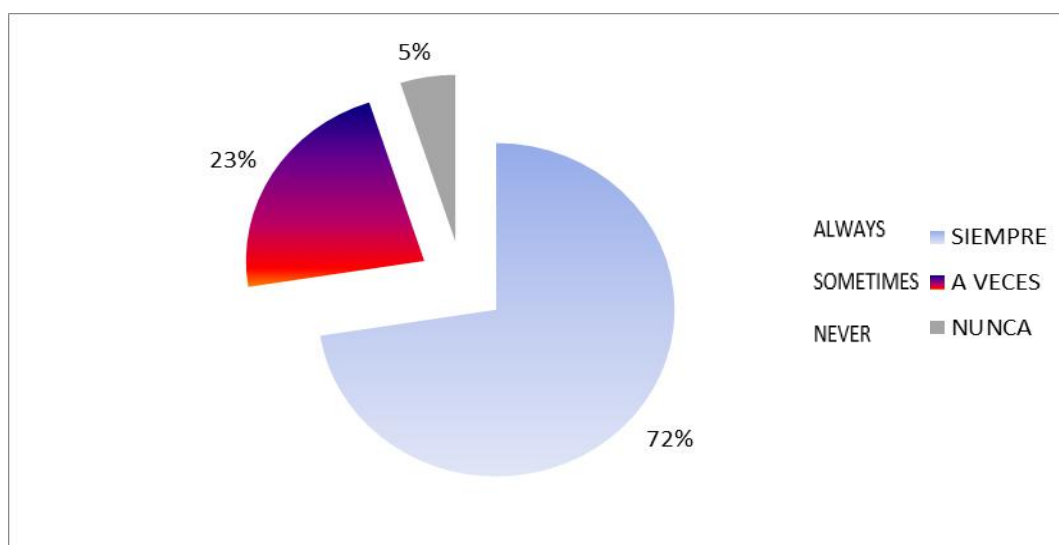
In addition, questionnaires were administered, following the recommendations of Teddlie and Tashakkori (2019), to gather quantitative data measuring key variables related to the emotional adaptation of relatives. This combination of qualitative and quantitative methods enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional adaptation of older adults' family members, following the methodology proposed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004).

Furthermore, a content analysis of qualitative responses was conducted, in line with Morse and Niehaus's guidelines (2009), to identify emerging patterns and relevant themes in qualitative data. Finally, descriptive statistics and regression analysis were employed, in accordance with Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), to analyze quantitative data and establish significant relationships among variables. This mixed methodology provided a solid foundation for addressing the emotional adaptation of older adults' family members from multiple perspectives.

### 3. Results And Discussion

Next, Figure 1 presents results in percentage for the question related to avoidance of events, people, places, or other things that remind them of their youth or adulthood.

**Figure 1** - Has your family member ever tried to avoid events, people, places, or other things that remind them of their youth or adulthood at any point?

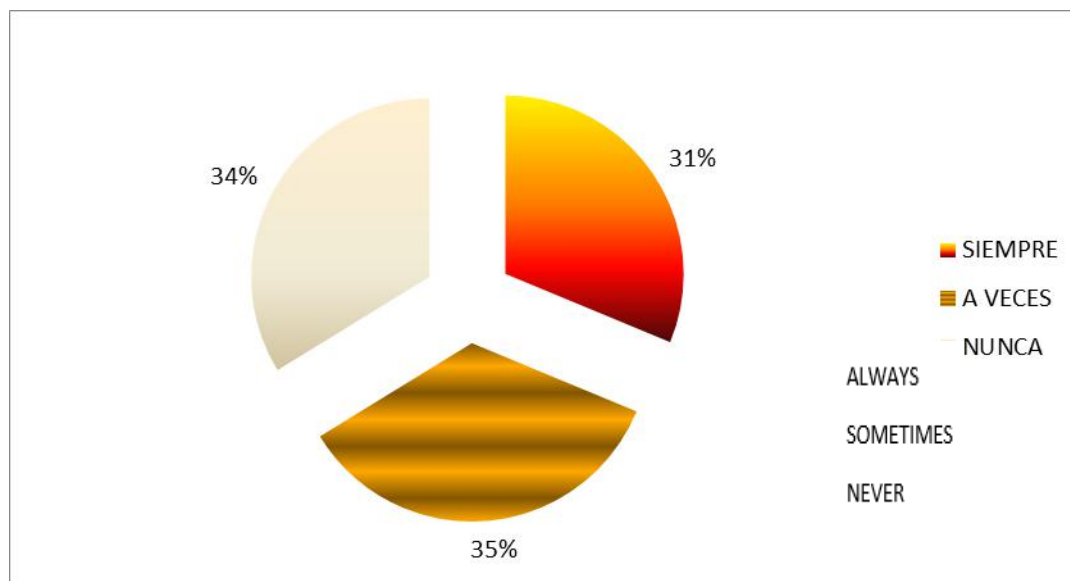


Source: Survey conducted with relatives of elderly adults at "San Camilo" Subcenter. Preparation: Research Group.

For 72% of the respondents, their family members always try to avoid events, people, places, or other things that remind them of their youth or adulthood. 23% mentioned that this has happened only sometimes, and 5% stated that this situation has never occurred.

Next, Figure 2 shows percentagem of family member used to do before but no longer does or tries to avoid.

**Figure 2** - Are there things that your family member used to do before but no longer does or tries to avoid?

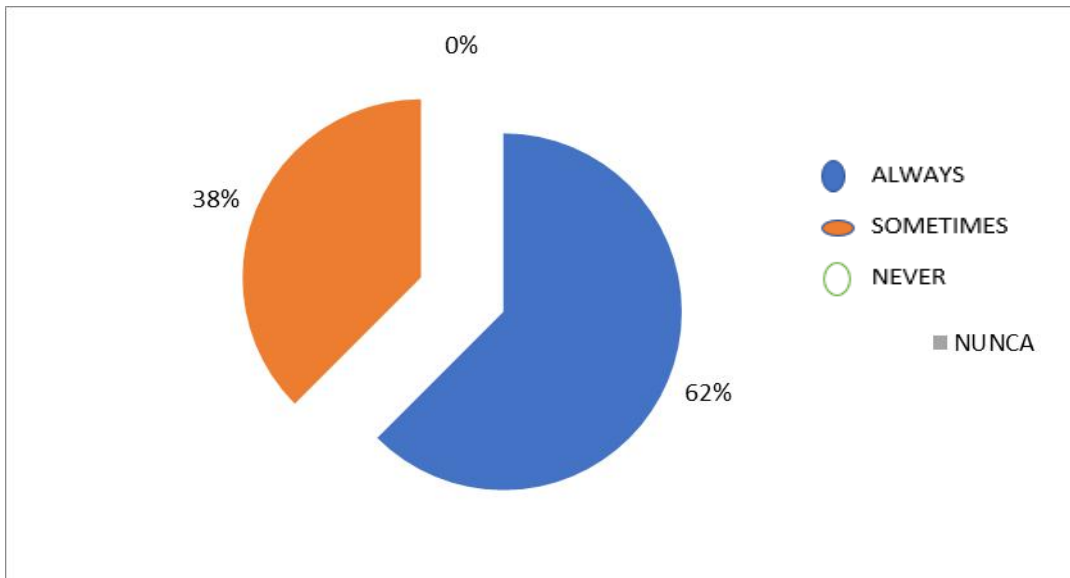


Source: Survey conducted with relatives of elderly adults at "San Camilo" Subcenter. Preparation: Research Group.

For 66% of respondents stated that their family members either always or on some occasions do not engage in certain activities that they used to do regularly before. The remaining 34% indicated that this does not happen. Therefore, based on this latter data, it can be inferred that this group of individuals is not as affected by their current situation as elderly adults and continues to carry out their activities relatively normally.

Figure 3 shows percentages for the question related if patient find it difficult or have trouble doing things they used to do normally because they think too much about their current reality.

**Figure 3** - Does your patient find it difficult or have trouble doing things they used to do normally because they think too much about their current reality?

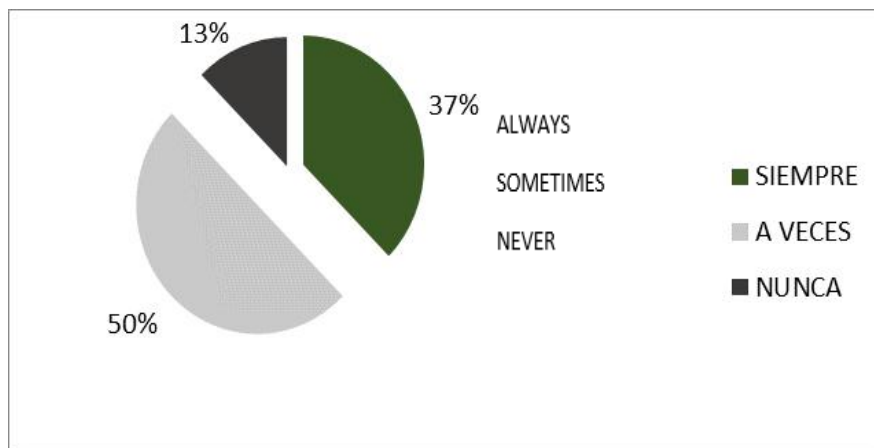


Source: Survey conducted with relatives of elderly adults at "San Camilo" Subcenter. Preparation: Research Group.

From the question, 100% of the professionals who participated in the survey believe that their patients find it difficult or have trouble doing things they used to do normally because they think too much about their current reality. Here, the importance of psychoeducation as a tool to help improve the current situation of elderly and their families should be emphasized, as without the necessary professional support, other health difficulties may arise.

Figure 4, next, show percentages related to status if patient ever had trouble accepting their current condition.

**Figure 4** - Has your patient ever had trouble accepting their current condition?



Source: Survey conducted with relatives of elderly adults at "San Camilo" Subcenter. Preparation: Research Group.

For 70% of the respondents, their patients have had difficulties accepting their current condition at some point, while the remaining 30% have never experienced this type of feeling. The condition of elderly is very fragile and sometimes misunderstood, so it should be considered that psychoeducational therapies should not only be provided to them but also to their closest family and friends.

#### 4. Conclusion

Old age should not be seen as a suspension in a person's life but as a continuous process of growth and development in which elderlies continue to be an active part of society, taking on new roles and contributions.

Emotional balance in this crucial stage of life lies in an individual's acceptance of their own achievements and failures. Psychoeducational counseling emerges as a fundamental tool to help individuals address and accept the changes and challenges that come with aging. The survey conducted reveals that a significant percentage (70%) of the relatives of elderlies indicate that their loved ones have difficulties accepting their current situation. This highlights the need to work on consolidating the idea that old age is a natural stage of life and to promote a positive attitude towards it.

Psychoeducational counseling programs emerge as an effective tool to improve the emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies. These programs not only provide psychological support but also contribute to the ongoing inclusion of elderlies in society and in their own final stage of life. In summary, these conclusions emphasize the importance of approaching old age from a perspective of personal and social growth. Accepting changes and the active role of elderlies in society are essential to foster an enriching experience in this stage of life. Additionally, the relevance of psychoeducational counseling as a valuable tool to assist family members in their adaptation process and support elderlies in their emotional and social well-being is highlighted.

This study highlights the importance of addressing the emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies in the context of geriatric care. Aging should be viewed as a continuous process of growth and development, and elderlies should be recognized as active members of society with new roles and contributions. Emotional balance during this stage is essential, and Psychoeducational counseling emerges as a vital tool to help individuals confront and accept the challenges that come with aging. The survey results indicate that a significant proportion of relatives of elderlies report difficulties in accepting their loved ones' current situation. This emphasizes the need to cultivate a positive attitude toward old age and promote the idea that it is a natural phase of life. Psychoeducational counseling programs are shown to be effective in enhancing the emotional adaptation of relatives of elderlies. These programs provide not only psychological support but also contribute to the ongoing inclusion of elderlies in society and in their final stage of life. In conclusion, it is essential to approach old age as a phase of personal and social growth. Accepting the changes and active roles of elderlies in society is crucial for a fulfilling experience during this stage. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of Psychoeducational counseling as a valuable tool to assist family members in their adaptation process and support elderlies in their emotional and social well-being.

In conclusion, this research highlights the importance of addressing the emotional needs of relatives of elderlies and emphasizes the value of Psychoeducational counseling in improving their adaptation to the challenges of aging. Future research in this area can contribute to the development of more effective interventions and policies to support elderlies and their families as they navigate the later stages of life.

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