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A study on the relationship between family support systems and successful aging of the elderly

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess the relationship between family support systems and successful aging among the elderly. A total of 120 elderly individuals (60 men and 60 women), aged 60-75 years from Hyderabad city, Telangana state, were selected as the sample through a purposive random sampling method. A descriptive correlational research design was employed. Data was collected using a self-developed tool on family support systems and the Successful Aging Scale. The family support systems questionnaire assessed emotional, informational, living arrangement, financial, health and emergency support received from family, while the Successful Aging Scale measured physical, psychological, cognitive, resilience and adaptability, autonomy and self-management, as well as life satisfaction of the elderly. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between family support systems and successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.647^{**}$), significant at the 0.01 level of probability. The findings indicated that elderly individuals receiving higher levels of family support experienced greater successful aging by maintaining better physical, psychological and cognitive functioning, along with higher resilience, autonomy and life satisfaction. Overall, supportive family environments contributed to better adjustment during later life. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening family support systems to promote successful aging and enhance the quality of life of the elderly.

Keywords: Family support system, older adults, Quality of life and Successful aging

Introduction

Population ageing has emerged as one of the most significant demographic transitions of the twenty-first century due to declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. As individuals transition into later life, they experience progressive physical, psychological and social changes that influence their health, independence and quality of life. During this stage, older adults often face age-related challenges such as chronic illnesses, functional decline, loneliness and dependency, making family support an essential resource for maintaining well-being and achieving successful aging (WHO, 2025). Research consistently indicated that older adults with supportive family relationships demonstrate better physical health, psychological adjustment and social functioning than those receiving inadequate family support.

The family support system is a multidimensional construct referring to the emotional, informational, living, financial, health-related and emergency assistance provided by family members that enables older adults to cope effectively with age-related challenges and maintain their physical,

psychological and social well-being (Kusumaningrum *et al.* 2025) ^[7]. Family support promotes emotional security, enhances self-confidence, facilitates healthcare utilization and encourages active participation in daily life. A community-based study conducted by Shrestha *et al.* (2024) ^[14] reported that 77.1% of older adults received family support for various aspects of daily life, while 46% received assistance with activities of daily living. Older adults receiving family assistance were significantly more likely to report better self-rated health than those without such support.

At the same time, successful aging has emerged as a central concept in gerontology. Successful aging is not merely the absence of disease or disability but the ability to maintain physical vitality, psychological well-being, cognitive functioning, social engagement, resilience, autonomy and life satisfaction while adapting positively to age-related changes (Rowe & Kahn, 1997) ^[12]. A study conducted by Yu *et al.* (2025) ^[19] identified psychological, social and physical factors as the key determinants of successful aging, highlighting that family support and positive interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in promoting healthy aging.

Supporting this evidence, Makhtar *et al.* (2024) ^[10] reported that 75% of older adults perceived high levels of familial and social support, while 78.5% exhibited high levels of successful aging. The study further demonstrated a statistically significant positive association between family support and successful aging, indicating that older adults who receive stronger support from their families are more likely to maintain better physical functioning, psychological resilience, active social participation and greater life satisfaction.

These insights underscore that aging is a multidimensional process in which family relationships play a vital role in determining successful aging. Adequate family support enhances independence, resilience, self-esteem and social connectedness, whereas inadequate support increases the risk of dependency, loneliness and poor aging outcomes. Research has consistently shown that family support contributes positively to successful aging by improving the physical, psychological and social well-being of older adults.

Review of literature

Song *et al.* (2025) ^[15] examined the relationship between support from adult children and successful aging among 1,200 older adults. The findings revealed that support from children was positively associated with higher levels of successful aging, especially in well-being and life satisfaction.

Alaghi *et al.* (2025) ^[1] reported that 63% of elderly individuals residing with family members experienced higher levels of successful aging compared to those of 37% living alone. The study found that family co-residence and support play a significant role in improving quality of life and promoting successful aging.

Zanjari *et al.* (2024) ^[20] conducted a study on 600 older adults and showed that elderly individuals received consistent emotional and financial support from family members experienced higher levels of successful aging and life satisfaction. About 52% of participants with strong family support reported positive successful aging indicators compared to those with limited support.

Makhtar *et al.* (2024) ^[10] studied the relationship between family support and successful aging and findings of the study reported that strong family support was positively associated with successful aging. The study further reported that family-based support systems play a vital role in maintaining higher levels of successful aging among the elderly.

Kim *et al.* (2023) ^[6] conducted a study on determinants of successful aging among 400 older adults and the study found that social resources and family support were among the most influential predictors of successful aging, surpassing material factors.

Tian *et al.* (2022) ^[17] conducted a study on 13,168 older adults and revealed that older adults with strong emotional and practical family support reported higher levels of healthy aging. The majority 77.3% of the respondents with strong family support demonstrated better successful aging outcomes and improved quality of life.

Li *et al.* (2022) ^[8] studied resilience, family support and successful aging and reported that older adults with stronger family support and higher resilience experienced better health and life satisfaction. Around 84% of participants with supportive family relationships showed positive successful aging and greater adaptability to aging-related challenges.

Materials and Methods

Location of the study

The present study was aimed to study the relationship between family support systems and successful aging among the elderly. The study was carried out in Hyderabad city of Telangana state because the city's ethnography has a diverse demographic population from various parts of Telangana state.

Sample size

A total of 120 elderly, comprising 60 men and 60 women, were selected as the sample for the study.

Tools used for the study

A questionnaire for family support systems was developed with 6 dimensions and 36 items, the dimensions were emotional, informational, living arrangement, financial, health and emergency support. Successful Aging Scale, under 6 components and 47 statements, such as physical, psychological, cognitive, resilience and adaptability, autonomy and self-management and life satisfaction was used.

Statistical Analysis

The SPSS 16.0 package program was used to analyze the data. Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to measure the relationship.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Relationship between family support systems and successful aging

Family Support System Domains	Physical Functioning	Psychological Functioning	Cognitive Functioning	Resilience and Adaptability	Autonomy and Self-management	Life Satisfaction	Overall Successful Aging
Emotional Support	0.757**	0.836**	0.833**	0.837**	0.776**	0.780**	0.697**
Informational Support	0.729**	0.794**	0.804**	0.789**	0.749**	0.771**	0.715**
Living Arrangement Support	0.807**	0.858**	0.860**	0.855**	0.820**	0.849**	0.818**
Financial Support	0.743**	0.815**	0.816**	0.807**	0.764**	0.779**	0.730**
Health Support	0.777**	0.828**	0.840**	0.839**	0.784**	0.812**	0.741**
Emergency Support	0.838**	0.879**	0.883**	0.876**	0.852**	0.872**	0.824**
Overall Family Support System	0.634**	0.729**	0.718**	0.712**	0.664**	0.685**	0.647**

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 depicts the relationship between the components of family support systems and the dimensions of successful aging of the elderly. It was observed that family support systems and its components, including emotional, informational, living arrangement, financial, health and emergency and overall family support, showed a statistically significant positive relationship with successful aging and all its dimensions, such as physical, psychological, cognitive, resilience and adaptability, autonomy and self-management, life satisfaction. Here, the interpretation is described for the relationship between the components of family support systems and overall successful aging to avoid repetition and to explain the association in a broader context.

Relationship between emotional support and successful aging

The variable “emotional support” showed a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.697^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding indicated that greater emotional support from family members was associated with higher levels of successful aging. Care, affection, understanding, encouragement and emotional reassurance from family helped elderly individuals maintain emotional stability, self-confidence and life satisfaction during later life.

These findings are on par with the study conducted by Chen and Feeley (2022) [2], which reported that emotional support from family members positively contributed to successful aging among older adults. The study further suggested that emotionally supportive family relationships reduced feelings of loneliness and promoted positive aging experiences.

Relationship between informational support and successful aging

The component “informational support” showed a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.715^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding indicated that better informational support from family members was associated with higher levels of successful aging. Advice, guidance and timely information from the family members helped elderly individuals make informed decisions regarding healthcare, financial matters and daily living activities, thereby supporting their overall well-being.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Kim *et al.* (2021) [5], which found that informational and advisory support from family members positively influenced health management, confidence and adaptation among older adults. The study further revealed that access to supportive guidance improved overall well-being and aging outcomes during later life.

Relationship between living arrangement support and successful aging

The dimension “living arrangement support” showed a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.818^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding suggested that supportive living arrangements provided by family members were associated with higher levels of successful aging. A supportive household environment, characterized by assistance with

household activities and readily available help when needed, contributed to better overall well-being in later life.

The present findings are in line with the study conducted by Teo *et al.* (2023) [16], which reported that older adults received practical assistance and living arrangement support from family members experienced better successful aging than those living alone. Co-residential living arrangements were found to provide assistance with daily activities, enhance safety and security and promote a supportive home environment, thereby contributing to successful aging in later life.

Relationship between financial support and successful aging

The variable “financial support” exhibited a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.730^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding indicated that greater financial support from family members was associated with higher levels of successful aging. Financial assistance helped the elderly individuals to meet their daily living expenses, access healthcare and other essential services, and manage age-related needs with reduced financial stress, thus promoting greater security and overall well-being of the elderly.

These findings are in line with the study conducted by Liu *et al.* (2024) [9], which reported that financial support and economic security were positively associated with successful aging by enhancing life satisfaction, promoting independence and improving the overall well-being of older adults.

Relationship between health-related support and successful aging

The domain of the family support system i.e. “health-related support” showed a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.741^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding indicated that elderly individuals who received greater health-related support from family members was associated with higher levels of successful aging. Elderly with support in managing health conditions, attending regular medical check-ups, adhering to treatment schedules and receiving caregiving assistance helped them to maintain better physical and psychological well-being in later life.

These findings are supported by a study conducted by Sharma and Devi (2020) [13], who revealed that family involvement in health care and caregiving positively contributed to physical well-being, emotional security and successful aging among older adults.

Relationship between emergency support and successful aging

The dimension “emergency support” showed a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.824^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding indicated that greater emergency support from family members was associated with higher levels of successful aging. Timely assistance during illness, accidents and other emergencies provided elderly individuals with a greater sense of safety, emotional reassurance and confidence, thereby contributing to their overall well-being among elderly.

These findings are aligned closely with the study conducted by Rao and Suma (2020) ^[11], which described that immediate family responsiveness and caregiving during emergencies positively influenced emotional well-being, security, and adjustment among older adults. The study further found that timely support during crises strengthened overall well-being and successful aging outcomes during later life.

Relationship between overall family support and successful aging

The correlational analysis revealed that overall family support had a significant positive relationship with overall successful aging among the elderly ($r = 0.647^{**}$) at 0.01 level of probability. The finding indicated that greater overall family support, comprising emotional, informational, financial, health-related, living arrangement and emergency support, was associated with higher levels of successful aging. The combined support received in these domains helped elderly individuals maintain better physical, psychological and cognitive functioning, strengthen resilience and adaptability, promote autonomy and self-management, and enhance life satisfaction, thereby contributing to successful aging in later life.

The present findings are consistent with the study by Cho *et al.* (2020) ^[3], which found that elderly individuals receiving greater family support exhibited better successful aging outcomes, including better physical health, emotional well-being, social participation, and life satisfaction. The study confirmed that family support systems act as an important protective and strengthening factor in promoting successful aging among the elderly.

Conclusion

The study concluded that family support had a significant positive relationship with successful aging among the elderly. This suggested that the elderly individuals who received greater emotional, informational, living arrangement, financial, health and emergency support from their family members experienced higher levels of successful aging. Adequate family support enhanced physical vitality, psychological well-being, cognitive functioning, resilience, autonomy, social engagement and life satisfaction, enabling older adults to cope more effectively with age-related challenges. Therefore, strengthening family support systems through family-centred interventions and awareness programmes is essential to promote successful aging and improve the overall quality of life of the elderly.

Future Scope

This study highlights the importance of strengthening family support systems to promote successful aging among older adults. The findings provide valuable insights for family members, healthcare professionals, social workers and policy makers in designing interventions that enhance family involvement in elderly care. Future research may be undertaken across diverse geographical regions, socio-economic groups and cultural settings using larger and more representative samples. Further studies may also examine additional factors such as social connections, resilience, community support and digital communication to develop

comprehensive strategies for promoting successful aging among the elderly.

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Conflict of Interest

None

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