

Dimensional analysis of the 'Belonging component' of quality of life of elderly across varying support

■ SARITA SAINI

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■ **ABSTRACT** : A study was undertaken to assess the various dimensions of the 'Belonging component' of the quality of life of elderly (65 years and above) living in various types of support systems. 'Belonging component' refers to how one fits in with people and places and is known to strongly impact the quality of life of an individual. The study comprised a sample of 400 subjects from Ludhiana city, equally drawn from four support systems viz., elderly living with sons, living with daughters, living alone, and living in institutions. The sample was further divided over the two sexes. A quality of life profile, senior's version prepared and published by quality of life research unit, University of Toronto, Canada (2000) was administered to measure the 'Belonging component' of quality of life (QOL) of the subjects across various support systems. The 'Belonging component' of the QOL was studied under three dimensions viz., 'Physical belonging' pertaining to how one fits in with the physical aspects of his environment, 'Social belonging' relating to how one fits in with the people around one's life and 'Community belonging' referring to the nexus between an individual and the resources that are typically available to most members of one's community. The study revealed that there were significant gender differentials across different dimensions of the 'Belonging component' of the QOL of aged living across different support systems. It was found that very few elderly females compared to males were enjoying 'Very good quality of life' with respect to the 'Belonging component'. The results revealed that 'Social belonging' dimension was significantly weaker for females living across all support systems except those 'living with daughters'. However, the 'Physical belonging' and 'Community belonging' dimensions were found to be significantly weaker for females 'living alone or in institutions'. Comparatively, the picture was far more encouraging for their male counterparts.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Quality of life (QOL), Belonging component of QOL, Support systems, Elderly

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Author for correspondence

SARITA SAINI

Department of Human
Development, College of Home
Science, Punjab Agricultural
University, LUDHIANA
(PUNJAB) INDIA
Email: saritasaini@pau.edu