

Comparison of quality of life indicators of the elderly in Croatian urban and rural areas

Usporedba indikatora kvalitete života između starijih osoba u hrvatskim urbanim i ruralnim sredinama

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Introduction and objective: Population aging poses great challenges for the health and social systems of countries where the increase of the elderly population is recorded. Such demographic trends also occur in the Republic of Croatia. Social responsibility represents achieving optimal living conditions and ensuring the quality of life for the elderly. There appears to be consensus among researchers that improvement in quality of life measurement with the aim of linking various factors affecting the quality of the older population is needed. Quality of life is a multidimensional concept influenced by various subjective and objective factors. Surroundings largely affect the quality of life of the elderly, and therefore implies the importance of researching the impacts of the features of various resources in the local area on the quality of life of the elderly.

Objective: The aim of the research is to establish the quality of life of the elderly Croatian population and to investigate whether there are differences in quality of life indicators depending on whether people live in rural or urban areas.

Methods: The research tools used in the research include structured standardized personal data questionnaire and standardized measurement instruments including the World Health Organization (WHOQOL-BREF) questionnaire, the Barthell index of daily life activities, and the scale of temporal satisfaction with life. The study sample consisted of subjects of both sexes, 65 and over years of age, in the urban and rural areas of the Republic of Croatia.

Results: The results of the research have shown that there are statistically significant differences in the domains of quality of life and certain sociodemographic and socioeconomic indicators depending on whether the elderly live in urban or rural parts of Croatia.

Conclusion: Due to the differences that have emerged in the research, the responsibility of the Croatian institutions at national and local level would be to ensure that elderly, regardless of environment and personal socioeconomic status, should live in an environment that facilitates social functioning and reduces differences in the provision of health and social services needed in this age group.

Keywords: quality of life, elderly, urban environment, rural environment