



SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Rita Eyong Ashu

Loneliness Among Elderly in Nursing Homes

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Thesis abstract

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Author: Ashu Rita Eyong

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Supervisors: Sinikka Vainionpää, MHS, M.Ed, Lecturer and Marjut Asunmaa, MNSc, Senior lecturer.

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The aim of this thesis was to find out measures to alleviate loneliness among elderly in nursing homes. The goal of this research is to help caregivers and health care institutions to reduce loneliness among the elderly thereby mitigating mental health issues among the elderly. This work was conducted by the Seinäjoki university of Applied Sciences (SeAMK)

Data collection method and analysis were obtained using review literature and inductive content analysis of search materials. Articles were searched from reliable data bases like Academic search elite, CINAHL complete, PubMed, Sage and credible sources like google scholar. Information was gotten using search terms like loneliness, elderly, prevention, nurses' role, nursing home. A total of ten articles were selected for literature review and analysis based on inclusion and exclusion criteria with publications between 2010 and 2020. Findings suggested that, loneliness can be alleviated through group-based activities and one on one meetings with elderly, social support network, staying connected with family and friends, reciprocal follow up. Moreover, nurse's education and commitment couple with patients' engagement is an important ingredient to provide client centred care. However, there is the need to investigate the criteria on implementing and executing the interventions because loneliness is a subjective experience. It therefore, pose constraints in evaluating its' level and specific needs of the elderly has to be considered to reach the interventions.

Keywords: Loneliness, Elderly, Prevention, Nursing home, Nurse role

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ageing population is a global issue nowadays. Almost every country is encountering or undergoing growth in the number and proportion of the elderly in the population. Globally speaking, the percentage of persons over 65 years has risen between 1990 and 2019 has risen from 6% to 9% respectively and the number is estimated to increase to 16% by 2050. This can be explained by factors like; decrease in fertility rate, good healthcare services, improved living conditions and general in life expectancy. Since ageing is an import index of development, most governments are confronted with the difficulties to boost or heighten the health needs of the elderly and their security and social inclusion. (WHO 2019.) Loneliness is associated with aging and it has become an important and unavoidable issue in our societies. This is because loneliness can trigger unexpected health disorders, antisocial implications, low self- esteem, unmotivated moods, mental problems, and severe dissatisfaction in our personal and professional lives. (Pynnönen et al, 2018.) According to Gray et al (2019), loneliness is defined as “the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively”. Loneliness usually triggers feelings of sadness and depression. This means that loneliness could fundamentally be used to rate a person’s wellbeing, health, and happiness.

Clearly, we all experience loneliness in our lives in some way and we equally deal or cope with it differently. This is probably because there is disparity in the way loneliness is perceived, defined, and understood by different people, cultures, and backgrounds. In fact, loneliness can place someone in a painful and frustrating position that can diminish the person’s lifespan due to some predicaments like mental health crisis, stress, and depression. (Ypsilanti et al, 2019.) The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (2020) organizes and support the wellbeing and the needs of elderly persons in different dimensions. However, there are lots of lonely elderly people in Finland. Some of them live alone in their homes and many of them live in nursing homes where they still feel lonely. The author has experienced this in some care homes and these experiences motivated her interest in the topic. Therefore, the goal of this research is to investigate the different ways on how to prevent loneliness among the elderly.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Background and definitions of loneliness

Loneliness has become an important and unavoidable phenomenon in most societies because it is experience at all stages of life. It can be prolonged among the elderly while temporal in teenagers or adolescents. Adolescent leaving their homes to school lodgings in most part of the world, Finland not excluded usually face difficulties to cope with their new environment and thus, experience loneliness. (Wannebo, Devik & Uhrenfeldt 2019.)

Also, according to Anttila, Selander and Oinas, (2020, 2-5), between 1987 – 2010, most Finns currently spend approximately 124 minutes alone everyday watching TV programs and manipulating their computers. This is probably due to the aging Finnish population and the limited number of persons per household especially among the elderly. In 2016, 42.6% of Finnish households were living alone and about 5% of Finnish community dwelling elderly acknowledge feeling lonely usually or almost all the time (Pynnönen et al, 2018.) They further examined that, in Europe and estimated 12% of the elderly is always lonely with another 29% experiencing loneliness sometimes. However, loneliness is also experienced among young people with many health consequences at individual levels (Wannebo et al, 2019). Experienced by any group, previous studies on loneliness have demonstrated the link between loneliness and health issues like, mental disorders, antisocial implications, low self-esteem, unmotivated moods, mental problems, and severe dissatisfaction in our personal and professional lives. (Pynnönen, et al. 2018.)

The main causes of loneliness ranges from different individual factors (social isolation, widowhood, solitary life, and cultural factors), old age, low education, unemployment, poor socioeconomic status, depreciating health, and unsustainable living environment. (Nygqvist, Nygård, & Scharf 2019.) For this study, until these causes are known we will not know how to prevent loneliness. Whatever the origin maybe, loneliness is not the same as social or physical distancing. Social distancing means maintaining a safe distance from other people to confidently avoid physical, emotional, and mental injury as well as harassment or contamination (Gray et al 2019). Moreover, many people believe that a person who has many friends or who is amongst many people cannot endure loneliness. Realistically, this

belief cannot be true in cases where a student might be in a class of 30 classmates and he or she still feel lonely.

However, although loneliness has significant adverse effects on the lives of older adults, (Shaw et al, 2020), some people could prefer periodic loneliness when completing important tasks to augment efficiency, productivity, creativity, and relaxation of the brain. In this light, the research will highlight and examine three types of conceptual loneliness.

2.1.1 Social loneliness

Social loneliness can be defined as the loneliness that an individual experience when he/she lacks any form of social connection, network and contact with other people in the society. Social loneliness deals with the level of significance, value, quality and quantity of social connections and relationships that a person is interested to have in life or in a period. (Gray et al, 2019.) People could experience social loneliness when the expectations of being, creating or having a relationship are not fully met. Loneliness can best be evaluated by the individual going through it since it is a subjective phenomenon. (Anttila et al, 2020.) Thus, a person could develop a feeling of social loneliness when in romantic relationship, he or she does not have a sense of attachment amongst his peers or feel uncomfortable with a group of people (Gray 2019).

2.1.2 Emotional loneliness

Emotional loneliness is the negative feelings that a person develops because he or she lacks relationships such as a romantic association with others. It is a perceived lack of attachment or confidant. Emotional loneliness is a disturbing feeling that a person experiences when he or she lacks an emotional relationship or attachment with a person or other people (Wannebo et al 2019.) According to Gray et al (2019), a person could experience emotional loneliness when he or she does not have a person to share their sentimental or passionate feelings with. In the same light Anttila et al (2020) emphasizes that, one can experience emotional loneliness when he or she do not have a family member or friend to talk to, not having a romantic partner or mourning because of the death of an important person in their life.

2.1.3 Existential loneliness

Existential loneliness is a feeling or sense that cannot be attained through relationships, interactions, contacts, or meetings with other people. It arises when a person harbors a permanent feeling of being incomplete, deep rooted feelings of inadequacy, self-loathing, and low self-esteem. This type of loneliness can affect every area of ones because these thoughts or feelings influence the person to be permanently disconnected from other people. (Sundström et al, 2018.) Sometimes, even romantic relationships and social acquaintances cannot be remedies to existential loneliness because loneliness is not only experienced by older people but is a universal human experience. People still feel lonely even when they are surrounded by many people. Consequently, the analysis given above affirm the fact that loneliness is widely considered as an unpleasant feeling that could trigger serious health issues yet could be view in a positive sense like when we want to have quiet time for ourselves. (Ejlskov et al, 2018.)

In a nutshell, be it social, emotional, or existential loneliness, the signs and symptoms of loneliness differ among individuals just like the experiences occur dissimilarly depending on the personality. These include feeling exhausted in trying to socially engage, you try to connect or reach out to others and it is not reciprocated, overwhelming feeling of isolation no matter where you are, no close or best friends who sincerely understand you and the inability to engage with your connections is at the surface level. Someone needs help from a specialist if they have these signs. (Gray 2019; Shaw et al, 2020.)

2.2 Loneliness and nursing role

Elderly persons living in elderly homes experience loneliness in different ways and in other to prevent this phenomenon, lonely elderly and nurses must collaborate. Nurses act as educators and facilitators to assist individuals meet their self-care needs thereby, enhancing their psychological and mental wellbeing. Thus, the author highlighted Dorothea Orem's selfcare nursing theory to show that patients and nurses have different roles in reinstating the mental and emotional wellbeing of lonely elderly. Self-care entails those activities that lonely adults or any human being would perform by themselves to remain healthy, safe, and happy. Thus, our environments, various communities, cultures, and families play important

roles to safeguard the recovering process of a lonely person's health and wellbeing. (Fawcett 2017.)

In addition, self-care agency is the natural human abilities to care for themselves and it could be influenced by factors such as age, gender, health facilities, available resources etc. Therefore, the therapeutic demands of self-care are necessary actions, procedures, and health-care prerequisites to consider when rehabilitating a lonely adult as well as other patients. Basically, the theory is significant tool to manage and prevent adult loneliness because: It helps nurses to effectively assess, diagnose and implement both scientific and professional strategies in safeguarding and reinstating the wellbeing of a patient. It further elaborates the different responsibilities of a nurse and a patient, and this enables them to collaborate and maintain a healthy relationship when dealing with one another. (Berbiglia and Banfield, 2013; Younas 2017.) Thus, the Self- Care Nursing was highlighted in this work to point out the fact that while nurses strive to render the best care they can afford, patient has a role to realize the goal.

Moreover, this nursing model can be used by caregivers and other health professionals to support elderly rehabilitation process by assisting and sustaining their cognitive, physical, social, and mental wellbeing when dealing with loneliness in elderly care. It equally reduces stress among nurses and other health professionals and enhance their capacity to provide and improve on the quality of care and preventing burnouts. Holistically, Orem's self-care theory significantly indicates that patients would effectively recover from their health issues when they can participate or play a role in their healing process. (Berbiglia et al, 2013; Sundström et al, 2018.)

The elderly population require a lot of healthcare needs both financially and professionally because they suffer from different chronic illnesses which among others leads to loneliness. This in a long run results to mental health and emotional distress with stress, depression, and thoughts of suicide. In nursing, health promotion is very important, and nurses are at the center of the whole process to reach out to different groups especially the elderly as they carry out their nursing roles. As a result, nurses must assess the patients' health problem including loneliness because loneliness may not be easily recognized. Also, nurses must raise awareness and determine if an elderly person under their care is at risk of loneliness,

recognize and assess the need of social support and social network. (Brunner & Suddarth, 2012, 9.)

Furthermore, a nurse having a talk with patients' family helps reveal the interest and the kind of activities that the patient enjoys, and the objective is to encourage habits and actions like self-care, creating new friends that promotes health. Nurses need to work with multi-disciplinary team in order to set and meet the goals of care. Their leading role is to educate, support and encourage the patient though patient should collaborate with nurse to realize these goals. (Sya'diyah et al, 2020.)

Equally, talking about loneliness should not be a taboo subject among nurses when giving care to the elderly. Upgrading education and skills is very important for nurses and other health care professionals in identifying the symptoms of loneliness among the elderly. Faced with many health challenges, elderly do not generally admit experiencing loneliness when the subject is brought up at first time. Some level of trust must be established between the nurse and the patient then, it becomes easier for the elderly to express their feelings. Hence, nurses should have a grip about the phenomenon of loneliness while they pursue their education and equally participate in workshops to gain more talents to communicate, interact and handle loneliness in those elderly under their care. (Fawcett 2017.)

3. THE GOAL AND PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The purpose of this thesis is to find measures how loneliness can be prevented amongst the elderly in nursing homes. The goal of this research is to help caregivers and health care institutions to reduce loneliness among the elderly thereby mitigating mental health issues among the elderly. The main research question in this study is

How can loneliness be prevented among the elderly in nursing homes?

4. DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND ANNALYSIS

The method used by the author is literature review using inductive content analysis. The inductive approach is used in the analytical process of the collected data from different scientific sources. Data collection method was aimed at giving some evidence to the research guided by dissimilar publications and sources that were used in the research.

4.1 Literature Review

Literature review gives a comprehensive outline of the author's research objective, goal, research question, concept, and theory that the author adapts to investigate, analyze, support the arguments, and underpins the results. It is an appraisal of preexisting knowledge that is used to come up with a critical, objective analysis and findings of the subject under discussion. This allows the researcher to come up with a synopsis or resume of the proves or evidence in answering the research question. (Library Resource Guide) Literature review is indispensable in most academic works and other scientific discipline because there is need to upgrade and make innovations from time to time. The main elements of literature appraisal include assessing the necessary data, synopsis of information, critical thinking, paraphrasing, judgement, and the ability to make accurate citations (Maltby, Williams & McGarry, 2014).

4.2 Data Collection

Data collection technique is basically through pre-existing literatures. The author searched information from SeAMK Nursing data bases like PubMed, CINAHL complete, SeAMK Finna, Sage Journals, and other credible sources like Google scholar. The articles that were selected were written in English and published between 2010 and 2020. The main keywords used for the search in CINAHL Complete were Loneliness 'AND' Elderly that resulted to 709 and after narrowing the search a total of 106 articles were related to the study. Still in CINAHL this time with Loneliness 'AND' Elderly 'AND' Nursing homes resulted to 86 and after refining the search 44 were related to the topic. In Academic Search Elite the same terms were used for the first time with 1,261 results and refining the results later amounted

to 199 articles. In the second search attempt, still in Academic Search Elite with Loneliness 'AND' Elderly 'AND' Nurses yielded to 73 and after narrowing the search it resulted to 23 articles. In PubMed, advanced search made with phrases like; 'Loneliness elderly prevention' that resulted to 259. In Sage and Google scholar phrases like 'Loneliness elderly prevention Nursing home' were used to conduct searches as well, and 3 articles using inclusion and exclusion criteria were chosen from both data bases. In all, articles related to the concept of loneliness, interventions to prevent loneliness among elderly in nursing homes and to some extent, those highlighting the relationship between nurse and elderly were selected.

More than 25 articles related to the topic were selected at first. After reading the titles and abstracts and close examining the articles again with full text publication to see that they meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 10 articles were chosen for the study to bring out the findings. Evident in appendix 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion criterion for data collection

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Research articles with abstracts	Non research articles, no abstracts
Free full available (PDF) articles	Access required
Articles written in English	Articles written in other languages
Articles related to the topic	Not related to the topic
Elderly home	Community based
Research carryout for both gender	Only for one gender
Articles published from 2011	Articles published before 2010

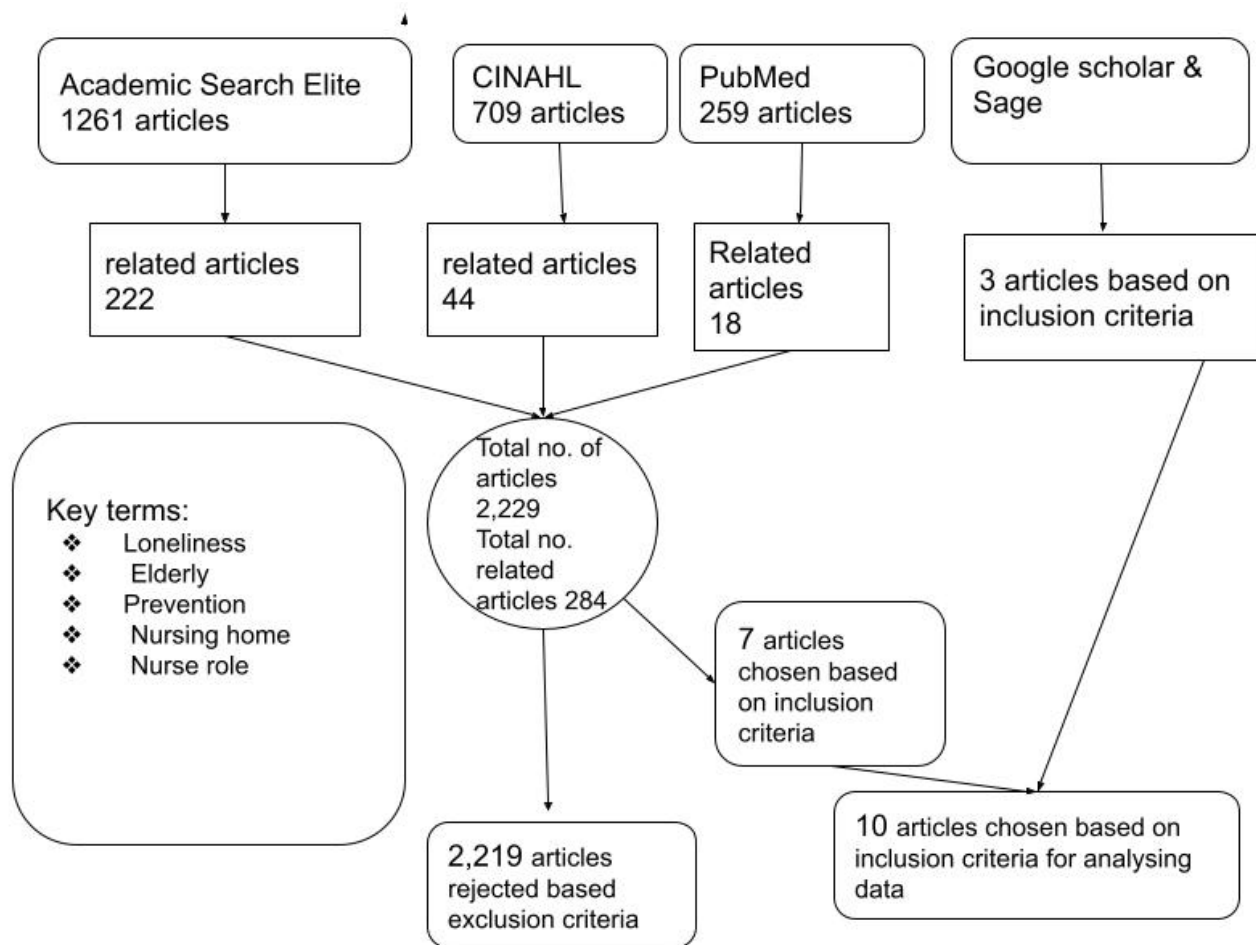


Figure 1. Data Collection Method

4.3 Data analysis

Inductive content analysis was used to analyze data in this research. This is applied because it allowed the author to extensively re-examine the research hypotheses by gathering information from a wide range of existing sources to connect the research's aims to major concepts in nursing practices. Inductive analysis is a qualitative approach that is used to develop theory and identify themes by studying documents and printed materials whereby themes that are being used rely on inductive reasoning (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo 2020). The motive of this approach was to adequately explore and breakdown the research question, and to constructively examine how some elderly people have survived loneliness. The research approach allows the author to objectively describe the research phenomenon theoretically because human experiences are usually described at different perspective of their individual background (Kyngäs et al, 2020,13). Using this approach facilitated the investigations, analysis and a vivid presentation of the research findings, recommendations, and conclusion to highlight the significance of the study.

This approach is aimed at creating concepts, categories and themes from the data that has been collected for analysis which involve open coding or open data reduction, making categories and abstraction and formation of concepts by outlining the similarities and differences between coded data. The purpose of this is to be able to bring out an abstract that gives a synopsis of the categories, concepts and bringing out the results. (Kyngäs et al, 2020.)

Open coding in the analyzing process signifies that notes and headings are made while reading the selected articles. The articles are keenly read, and important keywords and notes are marked. Also, chosen articles were chronologically arranged for example from 1, 2, 3....10 to help the author select and re- read. Thus, while reading through the selected articles, captivating terms or phrases that are found include staying connected, developing new skills, group-based participation (reminiscence therapy and videoconferencing) educational training, health and social support, one - to - one meetings with elderly (use of computer training, volunteering visitors). This important information was highlighted or written down in margins and was transferred from margins to coding sheets. In addition, a list of categories grouped under higher order headings was made with the intention to answer the research question, which is: How can loneliness be prevented among elderly in

nursing home? After coding these materials, two main themes were found, and they were *leisure activities* and *communication*. After the main themes were found the sub themes were constricted by putting the phrases with the similar content into one group. This made data comprehensive and organized.

Table 2. Inductive content analysis procedure

Research question	Main themes	Sub themes
How can loneliness be prevented among the elderly in nursing homes?	Leisure activities	Group based participation one to one meeting with elderly Social support
	Communication	Staying connected (use of telephone and video calls and videoconferencing) and befriending Computer training Reciprocal follow up

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Leisure activities

5.1.1 Group based participation

Landeiro et al, (2017) revealed that group-based intervention through support group activities, reminiscence therapy and one to one intervention with use of computer training and animal companionship with elderly is an effective method to decrease social isolation and alleviate loneliness among elderly in assisted living facilities or nursing homes. For instance, having a robot pet to bone with a in their boring moments will reduce loneliness among the elderly. *They* further suggested that these measures can be centered on the training of social skills like educational course on friendship and methods to improve social behavior. Equally, different groups like 'honeymoon' finding the team spirit, Trust and encouragement, mourning, plans just to name a few, are scenarios that bring older people together depending on their interest to freely express their likes and emotions in arts, music, movie that re-echoed reminiscence in life, text reading that brought about loneliness. With encouragement and trust building among the elderly, makes them to freely express their different experiences and through this, the goal of creating new friends and alleviating loneliness is attained. (Pitkälä, Routasalo & Savikko 2014.)

5.1.2 Social Support

Social relations are to an extent affecting health and the general wellbeing of elderly. As such, engaging on interventions like reminiscence therapy will improve on the health and social status of the elderly. (Mikkelsen et al, 2019.) Many studies have shown that loneliness among elderly people is associated with mental health risk and health related diseases like Alzheimer, dementia, coronary disorders and general declining health. In this regard, nurses, social care professionals and allied workers need to be increasing involve in supporting the elderly. As such, identifying loneliness in elderly in nursing homes and implementing a care plan that involve them will prevent loneliness from getting chronic. Therefore, geriatric rehabilitation programs like physical exercise and lectures focusing on

how elderly can manage and cope with their wellbeing will foster good health. In addition, shared activities among elderly through visual art discussion and aerobic activities like walking and stretching, humor and psychosocial therapy can greatly alleviate loneliness in elderly in nursing homes. (Cohen-Mansfield & Perach 2015.)

Social support is related to elderly's health and quality of life. It can be seen in different facets including emotional, appraisal, informational and instrumental support. Family member involvement is an important issue of social support of elderly residents under care in nursing homes. (Tsai et al, 2010.) Enhancing social support by creating new friends and maintaining existing relationships, self-esteem, and support groups to share common experiences of bereavement for instance, will create avenues for social interaction thereby reducing loneliness. Equally, through interactive games and social cognitive training (self-management group discussions), transportation support and serving special meals for the residents will rekindle their hope and better perception about their environment and a sense of belonging. Moreover, elderly must improve their interaction with caregivers as well. All these will effectively reduce loneliness. (Landeiro et al, 2017.)

5.2 Communication skills

5.2.1 Staying connected

The main medium of staying connected with family members, loved ones, friends, and social groups is via phone calls, telephone messages and social media are effective and impressive ways to reduce loneliness among the elderly. According to Chen & Schulz (2016), information communication technology has improved social support, social connectedness, and positive impacts on loneliness. Before Covid pandemic, residents in nursing homes have suffered loneliness and insufficient contact from family members and loved ones. With increasing challenges posed by Covid-19, elderly is experiencing heightened level of loneliness. Therefore, face to face contact through video calls can lessen the level of loneliness experience by elderly. Implementing video calls in nursing facilities is a salient or outstanding intervention with the help of a trained research assistance who spend some time with residents who can meet their daily living activities depending on their appointment. Using this once or twice a month and in other events like birthday and special

family events will keep the elderly better connected to their social contacts and family and reduce loneliness. (Tsai et al, 2010; Zamir et al, 2018.)

Apart from video conferencing, telephone outreach can be organized free will or volunteer-befriending programs through which students' volunteers from health care field can be linked to interested elderly to have interactive phone calls weekly. This will create a platform where the volunteers interact with the interested elderly by sharing their live experiences thus, making life worth living, generating a sense of belonging and knowing that there is someone out for them. These reduce feelings of anxiety, restlessness, isolation and loneliness, (Van et al, 2020.

5.2.2 Computer training

Depending on their situation, older adults can turn the times that they spend alone to do something productive, meaningful, and pleasurable. Thus, the lonely moment could be the most salient period for an elderly person to develop new skills or be more creative by doing fun activities that would make them feel relax and happy. Through this, a person would replace or turn the negative influence of loneliness into fun and positive experiences. As such, temporal holidays, indoor gardening and social skills training programs either computer based or contact learning with themes like 'education courses on friendship' and 'strategies to improve social behavior' will not only improve social interaction but will maintain existing relationships and alleviate loneliness in the elderly. (Landeiro et al, 2017.) In the same sense, Cohen-Mansfield et al, 2015 emphasize that loneliness can be mitigate by applying educational interventions focus on social network preservation and enhancement. *Consequently*, developing such knowledge, skills and abilities would certainly preoccupy elderly persons each day and would help to mitigate or completely eradicate the feelings of being lonely.

5.2.3 Reciprocal follow up

In as much as many interventions have been put in place to alleviate loneliness among the elderly, training qualified facilitators to implement and follow up these measures is imperative. Jansson, Savikko, & Pitkälä (2018) emphasize that training of professionals is a

key element of successful intervention. *Consequently*, an outstanding method to curb loneliness is through group and trained model like 'Circle of Friends' whose activities (interaction among group members) has improved the wellbeing and health of the elderly, reduce the use of health services and decline in mortality rate among the elderly in Finland. Facilitators include professional like occupational therapist, social workers and nurses who are motivated to orientate groups of elderly persons in nursing facilities. They need to learn and enhance group dynamics, how to empower interested participants, objective oriented, client centred group meetings and support interaction among the elderly members. They need to participate in workshops in specific themes like loneliness and mitigation among elderly, recruiting and interviewing of group participants over a period of time and keeping communication with those elderly who are active members in some of these groups. Therefore, gaining knowledge will help trainees to implement and practicalize the interventions that have been put in place through group participation like 'Circle of Friends', honeymoon and trust and encouragement thereby alleviating loneliness. (Pitkälä et al, 2014 & Jansson et al, 2018.)

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical issues are indispensable in every research work from the selection of the topic, collection of data and analysis to the findings or results. Also, ethical issues in nursing research like any other research deals with humans who are the subject of study and must follow specific codes of ethics aims to protect the study participants. It further center on the quality of professionalism with the goal to achieve excellent scientific approaches to obtain accountability in research. The main roles and importance of ethical principles in subject protection include autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice. (Kyngäs et al, 2020.) *They* still emphasized the need for researcher to protect the subject participants through the research process under ethical guidelines like honesty, objectivity, openness, confidentiality, carefulness, freedom, respect for colleagues, respect for law and respect for intellectual properties. The approach used in this research was literature review which makes it difficult to observe ethical issues at the initial scripts. A descriptive ethical assessment of the original literature in this study would have been better but was fraught with limitations in time and resources.

Thus, the author applied and respected all the moral and ethics required to conduct a research by committing to the standard process of review literature by interpreting and giving her own opinions in the analysis for the purpose of ethical objectivity. Being open in the research process will enhance reliability, transparency and cause social impact in the research. The author was honest, trustworthy, and respected the cultural, religious rights, gender, race as well as the legal rights everybody and organization that may be contacted during the research. Also, the author unequivocally obeyed all the SeAMK ethical rules and regulations during the research. Information was gathered from the school databases and used by the norms of the university with guidance from the supervisor. Therefore, the research was thoroughly done without doing any harm to any person, organization, or community.

Research limitations

Like any thesis, this research had some setbacks in the process of gathering information. First, the research was conducted in the heart of winter in Finland so, the adverse weather

conditions effected the quality of information gathered because the extreme cold weather hindered the author to reach out to some institutions to gather first-hand information. Secondly, the method of implementation is time demanding because it requires much time to read and extract facts. Also, it needed resources and finance which the author could not afford. Thirdly, language posted a barrier because some important articles were written in Finnish thus, limiting the chances of collecting significant data because the author has basic skills in reading and understanding Finnish.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Loneliness in general is a growing problem in most societies now a days and among the elderly living in nursing homes. Studies have shown that, chronic loneliness is a predictor of suicide and if not attended to can in a long run result to serious medical problems like sleep disorders, heart disease, substance abuse, hypertension and depression which can shorten the lifespan of elderly persons under care. Nurses and other health care workers are making great efforts to provide social support to the patient though, their limited working hours acts like a constrain for them to properly relieve lonely elderly. Many interventions like those mentioned above have been developed to tackle loneliness among the elderly with great success but more efforts must be done to improve on the measures that have proven beneficial to reduce loneliness. For instance, good social network connection will reduce dementia and other memory problems thus, elderly people under care in nursing homes have specific problems which means that different interventions need further investigations to adequately distribute or disseminate the measures. However, patients' devotion and nurse's responsibility in promoting patients' health as highlighted in Orem's theory of nursing practice are indispensable to attain these objectives.

I suggest that interventions funded by government and other organizations should investigate criteria for implementing and executing the interventions because loneliness is a subjective experience which pose constraints in evaluating the level and demands specific needs to reach the interventions. In addition, Nurses should have more time with the patients to mitigate loneliness. Also, social security institutions like KELA in Finland could create departments to frequently make phone calls or chat on social media with lonely elderly under care. Other studies have shown that loneliness contribute to health issues faced by the elderly but what is new in this study is that several measures were examined to show how loneliness can be alleviated not leaving out the patients' commitment, nurses' role and education that provides best quality care from evidence based to practice.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Articles, sources, and results

Articles	Data bases	Publication	Aim	Method	Findings
The Effect of Information Communication Technology Interventions on Reducing Social Isolation in the Elderly	PubMed	2016	Effects of ICT intervention in reducing elderly loneliness	A systematic review	ICT helped to connect elderly with the outside world, achieve social support, boost self-confidence and involving in activities of self-interest.
Interventions for Alleviating Loneliness among Older Persons	Sage Journal	2015	The benefit of loneliness intervention among the elderly	A critical review	Loneliness can be alleviated through educational intervention focus on social network maintenance
Correlates of Geriatric Loneliness in Philippine Nursing Homes	Academic Search Elite	2012	Correlation between loneliness and social isolation and life satisfaction in elderly Filipino	A multiple regression model	Homelessness, health, no family visits, and abandonment are risk factors of loneliness

Training professionals to implement a group model for alleviating loneliness among older people - 10-year follow-up study	Academic Search Elite	2018	To explain how the training of professional facilitators has succeeded in practice and describing the outcome of 'circle of friends' aims at alleviating loneliness and making new friends	Ten year follow up study	Based on a pedagogical framework, many facilitators were trained to apply and to spread the psychosocial interventions of loneliness. 71% of participants created new friends. Reciprocal follow up
Reducing social isolation and loneliness in older people	Google Scholar	2017	The purpose is to assess health promotion interventions in curbing social isolation and loneliness among the elderly.	A systematic review protocol	Group based and one to one intervention as means of reducing loneliness in nursing homes
Social Interventions Targeting Social Relations Among Older People at Nursing Homes	PubMed	2019	To detect if social intervention has effects on social and health related activities in nursing home residents	A Qualitative Synthesized Systematic Review	Social support aimed at intensifying existing relationship with family members
Videoconference program enhances social support, loneliness, and depressive status of elderly nursing	PubMed	2010	To evaluate the effectiveness of videoconferencing intervention in improving nursing home residents' social support,	Purposive sampling, design and setting	Videoconferencing greatly reduced loneliness and depression among elderly residents.

home residents			loneliness, and depression		
Group dynamics in older people's closed groups. Findings from Finnish psychosocial group rehabilitation for lonely older people.	Google Scholar	2015	Purpose is to alleviate loneliness by forming group participation between older people	Grounded theory	Group participation activated members socially and reduced loneliness
Combating Heightened Social Isolation of Nursing Home Elders: The Telephone Outreach in the COVID-19 Outbreak Program.	PubMed	2020	To address social isolation and loneliness among elderly residents in nursing homes	Partnership between interested residents in local nursing homes, recreation directors and healthcare students' volunteers to provide phone calls instructions to elderly	Increase social connectedness among interested elderly, reduced loneliness and provided safety during covid -19 pandemic
Video-calls to reduce loneliness and social isolation within care environments for older people	CINAHL	2018	Aimed at facilitating and implementing video calls for older people in care environments	A collaborative action research approach	Elderly people with social contacts used video calls with assistance from staff to remain better connected with family and friends

