



Psychological characteristics of healthy lifestyle and self compassion in socially active elderly persons

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PhD, Associate Professor **V.A. Kapustina**¹
A.S. Melnikova^{1, 2}

¹Novosibirsk State Technical University, Novosibirsk

²Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management, Novosibirsk

Corresponding author: kapustina@corp.nstu.ru

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to identify the relationship between the components of a healthy lifestyle and self-compassion in socially active elderly people.

Methods and structure of the study. To achieve the goal, tools were used - psychodiagnostic testing using the questionnaire «Profile of a Healthy Lifestyle» by M.D. Petrash, O.Yu. Strizhitskaya, I.R. Murtazina, self-compassion scales by K. Neff, adaptation by K.A. Chistopolskaya, E.N. Osina, S.N. Enikolopova. The study involved 86 respondents aged 57 to 79 years. Testing was carried out on the basis of the Novosibirsk State Technical University.

Results and conclusions. An average level of self-compassion was revealed in socially active older women and a high expression of most components of a healthy lifestyle. Correlation analysis using Spearman's Rs test showed the presence of significant connections between the components of a healthy lifestyle and the parameters of self-compassion, in particular, correlations were found between mindfulness, self-kindness, and over-identification with such components of a healthy lifestyle as internal growth and stress management. Socially active older women who show a balanced, friendly and attentive attitude to their experiences at a high level have high rates of desire for self-realization and the ability to recognize and counteract sources of stress. The results of the study suggest that incorporating psychological and self-compassion techniques can improve healthy lifestyles, increase resilience to stress, and promote healthy aging.

Keywords: *healthy lifestyle, healthy aging, self-compassion, social activity, elderly people.*

Introduction. Modern society is characterized by an increase in life expectancy with a decrease in the birth rate. The following features of the demographic structure have been identified: an increase in life expectancy; a change in the boundaries and ratios of age groups; the emergence of new age stages – «digital childhood», entry into adulthood; an increase in the stage of productive professional activity; the emergence of a period of productive post-professional life [2].

E.A. Sergienko identifies as factors of successful aging «the ability to maintain one's own individuality, the development of new opportunities for interaction with the environment, self-realization, the ability to adapt, flexible use and reorganization of one's

own resources, and access to external resources, the ability to cope, resist and compensate for diseases, constructive behavior patterns, and further building one's life path» [5]. Productive post-professional life implies high social activity of elderly people, which can contribute to a subjectively positive perception of aging and promote a healthy lifestyle. The authors study the conditions of positive aging and generativity, confirming the high importance of interaction with the social environment for successful aging [4]. Factors of social activity of elderly citizens using the example of the Belgorod region were studied by O.V. Besschetnova and L.V. Tarasova. According to their data, «marital status, health status, living conditions, education and professional expe-



rience, internal motivation, the opportunity to participate in cultural and leisure, labor, social, volunteer activities have a positive effect on social activity in old age, and a negative socio-political situation in the country, loneliness, biased attitude towards elderly citizens – negative» [1]. In this regard, 2 groups of factors influencing successful aging are distinguished: external - inclusion in socio-cultural life and interaction with loved ones, internal - certain personal characteristics and behavioral features that make up the adaptive potential of a person in old age. Thus, the relevance of the study is due to the need to identify socio-psychological factors that contribute to successful aging, in connection with current demographic changes.

Objective of the study was to determine the relationships between healthy lifestyle components and self-compassion in socially active elderly individuals.

Methods and structure of the study. The testing was conducted at the Novosibirsk State Technical University, in which 86 respondents aged 57 to 79 years took part. The main tools were psychodiagnostic testing using the questionnaire «Healthy Lifestyle Profile» by M.D. Petrash, O.Yu. Strizhitskaya, I.R. Murtazina, the self-compassion scale by K. Neff, and the adaptation by K.A. Chistopolskaya, E.N. Osin, S.N. Enikolopov [3, 6]. Statistical analysis was conducted using the jamovi Desktop program.

Results of the study and discussion. An analysis of the average results using the Healthy Lifestyle Profile method showed a high expression of most components of a healthy lifestyle. The highest values were found on the scales of Interpersonal Relationships and Internal Growth ($M=30,65$ and $M=27,05$, respectively, with a maximum possible value of 36), and the lowest on the scale of Physical Activity ($M=18,88$ with a maximum possible value of 32). In this regard, socially active elderly women are able to enjoy communicating with others, build relationships with loved ones, are prone to a benevolent perception of other people, have goals in life and strive for self-development and self-realization, but at the same time do not pay enough attention to physical exercise on a regular basis. The assessment of the data on the self-compassion scale showed that all components are expressed by respondents at an average level (mean values vary from 2,83 to 3,53), except for the self-criticism indicator ($M = 2,45$), which is closer to the upper limit of

the low level. The obtained result gives grounds to say that, in general, socially active representatives of the elderly are characterized by a sympathetic idea of themselves, despite the severity of condemnation of their shortcomings and actions.

Correlation analysis using Spearman's R_s -criterion showed the presence of significant relationships between the parameters of self-compassion and the components of a healthy lifestyle in socially active elderly women. The greatest number of correlations with the components of a healthy lifestyle (interpersonal relationships, internal growth, stress management) was found with the «mindfulness» subscale of the self-compassion scale ($R_s = 0,22$; $R_s = 0,39$; $R_s = 0,33$; $p < 0,05$, respectively). This means that socially active elderly women who demonstrate a balanced and attentive attitude to their experiences at a high level have high rates of readiness for communication and positive attitudes towards other people, desire for self-realization, and the ability to recognize and counteract sources of stress. The subscale «Kindness to oneself» of the self-compassion scale has direct correlations with the scales «inner growth» ($R_s = 0,33$, $p < 0,01$) and «stress management» ($R_s = 0,28$, $p < 0,01$), which allows us to talk about the importance of a benevolent and loving attitude towards oneself in socially active elderly women in difficult situations for their self-development and self-regulation when faced with stressors. Negative correlations with the scales «internal growth» ($R_s = -0,24$, $p < 0,05$) and «stress management» ($R_s = -0,34$, $p < 0,01$) were found with the subscale «excessive identification»: if socially active elderly women tend to dwell on their experiences and react sharply to failures, then their abilities for self-development and self-regulation in stressful situations are also reduced.

Conclusions. A study of the characteristics of self-compassion and a healthy lifestyle in socially active elderly women showed a connection between these psychological constructs. The results of the study suggest that the inclusion of psychological techniques and methods for developing self-compassion helps improve a healthy lifestyle, increase stress resistance, and promote successful aging.

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