



EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN OLDER ADULTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstrak

Older adults are prone to decreased psychological well-being due to biological, social, and emotional changes. Non-pharmacological interventions offer alternative approaches to improving mental health in older adults. Methods this systematic review analysed nine RCTs of intervention studies published between 2022–2024. The study evaluated the effectiveness of various interventions such as mindfulness, reminiscence therapy, virtual reality, and community social support. Results most studies (n = 9) reported improvements in psychological well-being, spirituality, and quality of life, as well as a decrease in symptoms of depression and anxiety. Community-based and self-reflective interventions such as life story reviews and Mindfulness-Based Elder Care (MBEC) showed significant results. Social support and psychological empowerment have proven to be important mediators of intervention success. Conclusions non-pharmacological interventions have great potential in improving the well-being of older adults. Further comprehensive and ongoing research is needed to ensure long-term effectiveness.

Keywords: *Awareness; Memory Therapy; Non-Pharmacological Interventions; Psychological Well-Being; Social Support.*

Abstract

Older adults are prone to decreased psychological well-being due to biological, social, and emotional changes. Non-pharmacological interventions offer alternative approaches to improving mental health in older adults. Methods this systematic review analysed nine RCTs of intervention studies published between 2022–2024. The study evaluated the effectiveness of various interventions such as mindfulness, reminiscence therapy, virtual reality, and community social support. Results most studies (n = 9) reported improvements in psychological well-being, spirituality, and quality of life, as well as a decrease in symptoms of depression and anxiety. Community-based and self-reflective interventions such as life story reviews and Mindfulness-Based Elder Care (MBEC) showed significant results. Social support and psychological empowerment have proven to be important mediators of intervention success. Conclusions non-pharmacological interventions have great potential in improving the well-being of older adults. Further comprehensive and ongoing research is needed to ensure long-term effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

The elderly are an age group that faces various significant transitions, both biologically, psychologically, and socially (Xu *et al.*, 2023) . Challenges such as decreased bodily function, loss of a partner, economic limitations, social isolation, and increased risk of chronic diseases are part of their daily lives (Sabeena & Kumar, 2022) . In the midst of this complexity, the decline in psychological well-being is often an overlooked aspect, even though it has a major impact on quality of life and overall health (Badawy *et al.*, 2024).

Various studies have shown that older adults are prone to depression, anxiety, loneliness, and a loss of meaning in life (Hsiung *et al.*, 2023) (Xu *et al.*, 2023) (Sabeena & Kumar, 2022) . Many seniors often feel that they are no longer needed and have limited opportunities for self-actualization, which may lead to decreased motivation and diminished psychological well-being.

Unfortunately, systemic support for the psychological well-being of the elderly is still limited. Most healthcare services focus on the physical and medical aspects (Behzadnia *et al.*, 2020a), while emotional and psychosocial aspects are often under-considered or not optimally integrated (Berkowsky, 2020) . In Indonesia, data shows that more than 30% of the elderly experience symptoms of depression and stress (Hanum, L.; Utoyo, DB; Jaya, 2020) . This figure is expected to be higher in rural areas that have limited access to mental health services and still face a strong stigma (Ramírez-Luzuriaga *et al.*, 2021).

A range of psychosocial and clinical interventions have been designed to improve the psychological well-being of the elderly (Sabeena & Kumar, 2022). However, the effectiveness of these interventions still varies and is often not comprehensively mapped (Creams) *et al.*, 2022), mainly based on evidence from randomised controlled trials (RCTs). This inconsistency is caused by differences in the research design, participant characteristics, and intervention methods used (Kuo & Chang, 2024).

This study aims to conduct a systematic review of psychosocial and clinical interventions that have been tested through RCTs. By analyzing the results of existing research, this study is expected to provide evidence-based recommendations that support clinical practice and more holistic policymaking. This approach is expected to be able to integrate emotional, social, and psychological dimensions in an effort to improve the overall quality of life of the elderly.

METHODS

Study Design

This study used a systematic review design following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines to analyze the psychosocial and clinical effects on improving the psychological well-being of older adults . The review protocol is listed at PROSPERO [1076313]. The article selection was conducted based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, with articles drawn from three main databases: Scopus AI (n = 16), PubMed (n = 2086), and WOS (n = 4863), a total of 6965 articles. After removing duplicates and articles published before 2020, 13,584 articles were filtered by title and abstract. A total of 4,900 articles were excluded as irrelevant, and 486 articles did not have full-text access, leaving 1,579 articles. After further screening, 35 articles were selected for a full review, but 26 articles were excluded due to non-compliant populations or did not use the RCT design, so 9 articles that met the inclusion criteria were ultimately selected.

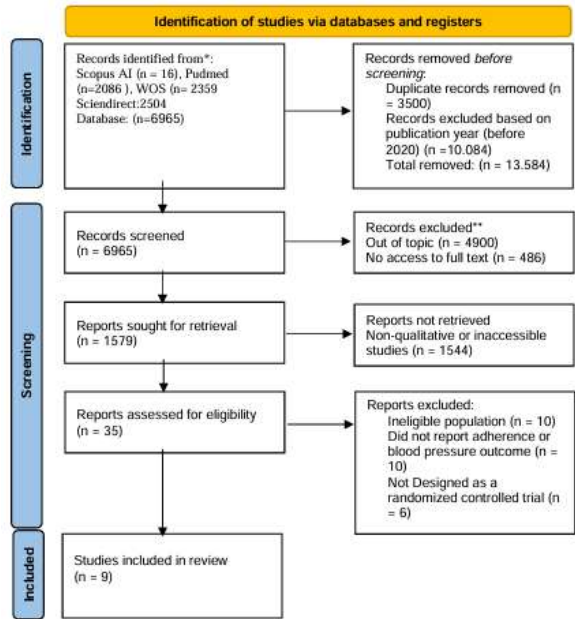


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart of the included study

Table 1. Characteristics of the included study following the Joanna briggs' institutes' data extraction

Author, year	Settings, context-related information	Duration/year of data collection	Methods, types of studies	Characteristics of participants	Phenomenon of interest/research objectives
(Badawy <i>et al.</i> , 2024)	Senior Community unit, y,	8 weeks	RCT, repeated-measures	75 seniors, 66.7% women, ages	Assessing the impact of life-story

Oman		ures	60–82	review intervent ions on QoL, depressi on, and life satisfacti on	Testing the effective ness of virtual reality therapy on mental well- being Assess the influenc e of MBEC on depressi on, anxiety, and spiritual well- being Compari ng mindful ness and self- manage ment for elderly well- being with SCD Effects of exercise program s on physical , mental, and biomark er health The effective ness of occupati onal telereha bilitatio n on the function and independ ence of	the elderly
(Al- Ghafri et al., 2024)	Beaut y Salon, Hong Kong	6 weeks	RCT , singl e- blind ed	216 elderly with physica l disabilit ies		
(Hsiun g et al., 2023)	LTC Board , Taiwa n	8 weeks + follow- up	RCT , singl e- blind	77 elderly with disabilit ies		
(Lópe z- Torres Hidalg o et al., 2021)	Multi - count ry Europ e (SCD -Well trial)	8 weeks + 6 months follow- up	Seco ndar y RCT s	147 elderly people with SCD		
(Lenze et al., 2023)	Elderl y post- COVI D-19, Spain	Not explicit ly mentio ned	RCT	120 elderly >60 years old		
(Plegu ezuelo s et al., 2023)	Elderl y comm unity, Spain	Not explicit ly mentio ned	RCT	80 elderly >65 years old, social risk		
(Schlo sser, Demni tz- King, et al., 2023)	Senio r comm unity, Japan	3 months	RCT	45 elderly >65 years old		The effective ness of tele- yoga in improvi ng the welfare of the elderly during the pandemi c
(Kwan et al., 2023)	Senio r Com munit y, China	Not mentio ned	RCT , 3 grou ps	210 elderly (interve ntional, active, passive control)	Evaluati on of family intergen erational intervent ions on well- being The effects of commun ity- based social support on blood pressure and complia nce	
Rony et al. (2023)	Senio r Citize ns, Bangl adesh	Not mentio ned	RCT	60 elderly people with hyperte nsion		

Population, Sample and Sampling

The population in this study is the elderly aged ≥60 years. Samples were selected from studies evaluating the effects of psychosocial and clinical interventions related to improving the psychological well-being of the elderly. Sampling was carried out systematically with clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, involving only quantitative studies with randomised controlled trials (RCTs) designs published between 2020-2024 in English.

Instruments

This review uses the PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome) framework to identify eligible studies. This study applied the PICO approach as follows: the population is the elderly aged ≥60 years, the intervention is psychosocial and clinical interventions with the main outcome being an improvement in the psychological well-being of the elderly. In addition, to assess the methodological quality of the selected studies, we used the JBI Critical Assessment Checklist for Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs). Thus, the

data used came from articles that met methodological standards, not from primary data collection.

Procedure

The study selection process was carried out by searching for relevant articles from four main databases: *Scopus*, *PubMed*, *WOS*, and *ScienceDirect*, with a focus on publications between January 2020 and December 2024. The search uses a combination of *MeSH terms* and a free keyword set with Boolean operators. All found articles are managed using Mendeley for reference management and duplicate removal.

Table 2 Database Search Strategy

Database	Search Queries	Results
Scopus AI	psychological well-being OR mental health OR emotional health OR psychological health AND parents or older adults OR elderly or elderly and interventions OR programs or treatments or strategies OR health or life satisfaction OR happiness and social support OR community	16
PubMed	psychological well-being OR mental health OR emotional health OR psychological health AND parents or older adults OR elderly or elderly and interventions OR programs or treatments or strategies OR health or life satisfaction OR happiness and social support OR community	2086
WOS	psychological well-being OR mental health OR emotional health OR psychological health AND parents or older adults OR elderly or elderly and interventions OR programs or treatments or strategies OR health or life satisfaction OR happiness and social support OR community	2353
Sciendirect	psychological well-being OR mental health OR emotional health OR psychological health AND parents or older adults OR elderly or elderly and interventions OR programs or treatments or strategies OR health or life satisfaction OR happiness and social support OR community	2504

Data Analysis

The data extracted from articles that meet the inclusion criteria are compiled in a synthesis table. The analysis was carried out in a structured narrative manner by grouping studies based on the design and focus of the intervention. The themes that emerged were then classified into two main categories: 1) Improving adherence to lifestyle and medication, and 2) The impact of interventions on the psychological well-being of the elderly. All analyses were conducted descriptively with a narrative synthesis approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review includes nine studies of non-pharmacological interventions between 2020-2025 aimed at improving the psychological well-being of the elderly, with four main themes: Mindfulness, Exercise, Community Social Support, and Mindfulness Integration with Personal Health Management.

1. Mindfulness and Psychological Well-Being:

Mindfulness interventions showed consistent benefits in reducing anxiety, depression, and enhancing spiritual well-being among older adults. For example, the *Mindfulness-Based Elder Care (MBEC)* program significantly reduced anxiety scores (mean difference = -3.3, *p* < 0.01) (Hsiung et al., 2023) and improved autonomy and cognitive perception (Schlosser, Demnitz-King, et al., 2023).

2. Sports and Physical Activity:

Structured exercise programs improved physical fitness and psychological well-being. (López-Torres Hidalgo et al., 2021) reported an 18% reduction in depressive symptoms after 8 weeks of supervised exercise, while (Lenze et al., 2023) (Pleguezuelos et al., 2023). found long-term physical activity improved both cardiorespiratory fitness and mood regulation.

3. Community-Based Social Support:

Community interventions, including *Sharing, Mind, and Enjoyment* (Chen et al., 2022), life story review interventions (Al-Ghafri et al., 2024), intergenerational family programs (Kwan et al., 2023) , consistently increased happiness and life satisfaction scores by 10–20%. The *community-based social support model* (Sitthidech et al., 2025) also demonstrated improved compliance and reduced loneliness.

4. Integration of Mindfulness with Personal Health Management:

Combined approaches integrating mindfulness and self-management yielded the strongest long-term effects on life satisfaction and psychological resilience (Hsiung et al., 2023) , mindfulness and self-management interventions for older adults with subjective cognitive decline (López-Torres Hidalgo et al., 2021), and combined mindfulness–health management programs (Schlosser, Klimecki, et al., 2023).

5. Overall Quality:

According to the JBI appraisal, methodological quality was moderate to high (62–77%), indicating that the findings provide reliable evidence of the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions in improving psychological well-being among older adults.

Discussion

The purpose of this systematic review was to evaluate the effectiveness of psychosocial and clinical interventions in improving the psychological well-being of older adults. The findings confirm that non-pharmacological interventions, including mindfulness, structured exercise, life story reviews, and community-based social support, significantly enhance mental health and quality of life in this population. Beyond these results, this review provides critical insight into the mechanisms and contextual factors that influence intervention outcomes.

Mindfulness interventions, such as *Mindfulness-Based Elder Care (MBEC)*, promote emotional regulation and autonomy, consistent with global nursing literature emphasizing holistic and person-centered approaches in gerontological care (Behzadnia et al., 2020b). Similarly, structured exercise enhances self-efficacy, reduces depressive symptoms, and supports functional independence, aligning with evidence from geriatric nursing studies linking physical activity to psychological resilience in aging (AbdElsalam & ElKholy, 2024). Community-based programs, including the *Sharing, Mind, and Enjoyment* and *intergenerational family* models, reinforce the social dimensions of health through active participation and empowerment key principles within community health nursing frameworks (Kwan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, culturally grounded interventions such as *keroncong* music therapy illustrate how traditional practices can be integrated into evidence-based nursing strategies. Music interventions stimulate alpha and delta brain waves that promote relaxation, emotional regulation, and a sense of calmness, while also reflecting the values of *transcultural nursing*, which advocates culturally sensitive care tailored to patient identity and context (Raufuddin, 2021). Thus, *keroncong* therapy represents not only a culturally relevant and accessible strategy but also an embodiment of culturally competent nursing practice in Indonesia.

Overall, this review highlights that effective non-pharmacological interventions share fundamental nursing principles person-centeredness, empowerment, and community engagement. These findings underscore the importance of integrating psychosocial, cultural, and spiritual dimensions into elderly nursing care, bridging international nursing evidence with local

cultural contexts to enhance holistic well-being among older adults.

CONCLUSIONS

This systematic review shows that non-pharmacological interventions, such as mindfulness, structured exercise, life story reviews, and community-based social support, have great potential in improving the psychological well-being of older adults. Most of the studies (n = 9) analyzed reported consistent results, including reductions in depressive and anxiety symptoms, improved spiritual and psychological well-being, and enhanced overall quality of life.

The duration of interventions ranged from four to eight weeks, with the shortest being the life story review program conducted by (Al-Ghafri et al., 2024) over four weeks, and the longest being the Mindfulness-Based Elder Care (MBEC) program by (Hsiung et al., 2023), which lasted eight weeks with follow-up sessions. The Sharing, Mind, and Enjoyment program by (Chen et al., 2022) and the community-based family intervention by (Kwan et al., 2023) were each conducted for six weeks.

Most interventions were delivered by trained nurses, psychologists, or community health workers, depending on the study context, emphasizing the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in elderly mental health care.

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