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Description Of Elderly Anxiety In The Face Of Death

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Abstract

The process of aging (aging) is a natural process faced by humans. In this process, the most crucial stage is the elderly stage. In this stage, in humans there is a natural decrease or change in physical, psychological and social conditions that interact with each other. The purpose of this research is to find out how the anxiety of the elderly in facing death is described. This study used qualitative research methods. The data collection method was carried out through an interview process with 1 (one) elderly subject aged 66 years. The interview was conducted using 7 open-ended questions related to the subject's readiness to face death. The results of this study indicate that the subject feels anxious and afraid of death, even though according to the subject death is a natural thing for every human being. This research is expected to provide insight regarding anxiety about death in the elderly from the point of view of psychological theory and research.

Keywords: Anxiety, Death, Late Adulthood

INTRODUCTION

Humans are perfect living creatures when compared to other living things. This is because humans have reason and mind. Humans grow and develop and experience changes, both physiological changes and psychological changes. Humans go through wrong changes as humans age, from infancy to old age. Elderly is the final stage of human life which is considered as someone who experiences various declines in his life functions. A person who is said to have entered old age or is elderly as stipulated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No.13 of 1998 states that what is meant is someone aged 60 years and over. Based on the explanation above,

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it can be understood that the elderly is someone who has entered the age of 60 years and over, so individuals who have entered that age can be said to be elderly.

Old age is the final stage of the process of human life, old age is often seen as a period of decline. The older a person is, the more they experience physical and psychological setbacks (Rahmawati & Saidiyah, 2016). This is in line with the opinion of Supriyantoro (2010) who revealed that in old age there is a decline in cells due to the aging process which can result in organ weakness, physical decline, the emergence of various kinds of diseases, especially degenerative diseases. Some of the elderly will experience obstacles in their lives so that not a few of them withdraw from social life, experience depression and do not want to carry out productive activities that are usually carried out, even to the point of wanting to commit suicide. Old age is also seen as a period of biological degeneration accompanied by various sufferings with periods of illness and aging and the awareness that everyone will die, so anxiety about death becomes an important psychological problem in the elderly, especially the elderly who experience chronic illness (Affandi, 2008).

In old age, a person will experience various events such as being abandoned by a child because of building their own family, retiring or quitting a job and also periods of anxiety in facing death that are getting closer (Santrock, 2002). Hendrasti (2021) states that in these conditions the elderly are not ready to face death because they do not understand death and the meaning of life, so that when discussing death, the elderly feel anxious, afraid, and anxious. Anxiety about death is usually characterized by feelings of worry, sadness, fear of experiencing terminal illness, fear of death, feelings of helplessness, negative thoughts, worry about the effects of death and others (Hidayat & Uliyah, 2014).

Anxiety as a psychological state of a person has an influence on the psychological dynamics of the elderly which will affect the adaptation process of the elderly. The elderly are often stereotyped as experiencing excessive worry about the threats and loss of life associated with aging (Maas, Buckwalter, Hardy, Reimer, Titler, & Specth, 2011). Jastrzębski, Rogoza and Slaski (2020) said in their research results that there are four factors associated with fear of death, such as fear of physical destruction, fear of the dying process, fear of facing death and fear of death itself.

Based on the results of interviews that were conducted with one elderly person, it was found that the elderly experienced anxiety about their death. This shows that the elderly experience a special experience in carrying out their developmental tasks, namely readiness to

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face death. Based on this background, this study aims to determine the anxiety of the elderly facing death.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative research method with a non-experimental type of research with the aim of collecting data directly through the interview process. This research on the anxiety of the elderly facing death is a type of research that does not use quantitative statistical figures, which is a qualitative research. Bogdan and Tailor, as cited by Moeleong, define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words or from the form of policy action (Moeleong, Lexy J. 2002).

The subjects in this study were elderly people aged 66 years (adults at the end of early adulthood). The interview was conducted on May 24, 2022. The interview began with a greeting, building report, and a request for subject willingness (Informed Consent). The questions asked were 7 main questions. The interview begins with the submission of light questions and ends with the main question, namely, how is the subject's preparation for death.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, the subject is often visited by his children and grandchildren only once every 2 months because they are busy with their respective careers. The subject also revealed that he felt anxious and afraid of death, even though according to the subject death was a natural thing for every human being. The results of research conducted by researchers on the subject indicate that excessive anxiety about death can lead to physical and psychological problems in the elderly. The view of the elderly about the concept of life and death plays an important role in the readiness of the elderly to face death and this readiness can affect the achievement of optimum aging (Adelina, 2007).

Anxiety about death is influenced by various factors such as self-actualization, self-esteem, certain experiences in life. Differences in culture and religion also distinguish the factors that influence one's death anxiety. Everyone will experience the process of getting old and old age is the last period of human life, where during this time a person experiences physical, mental and social decline little by little so that he cannot carry out his daily duties anymore. The process of aging (aging) is a natural process faced by humans. In this process, the most crucial stage is the elderly (elderly) stage. In this stage, in humans there is a natural decrease or change in

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physical, psychological and social conditions that interact with each other. This situation tends to have the potential to cause health problems in general (physical) and mental health in particular in elderly individuals.

Anxiety about death can be related to the arrival of death itself, and can also be related to the way death and the pain or torment that may accompany the arrival of death, therefore an in-depth understanding and discussion of the anxiety of the elderly is important for, especially the elderly who experience chronic illness, in Facing death is important to study, because anxiety can attack anyone. There is a specification of the form of anxiety that is based on the age of the individual.

Corr, Nabe & Corr (2003) suggest that attitudes related to death can focus on things including: (a) attitudes about the individual at the time of dying, namely reflecting fear and anxiety about the possibility of experiencing a long, difficult or painful death process, (b) attitudes about self-death, namely focusing on what death means for the individual, and (c) attitudes about what will happen to oneself after death, namely focusing on what will happen to the individual after death, (d) attitudes related with the death or loss of a loved one, which focuses on how the individual perceives the death of a loved one.

Research conducted by Harapan (2014), spiritual is a provision/preparation made to face death by worshiping and surrendering to God Almighty. From the data obtained, the spiritual needs carried out by the informants to prepare for their death are not leaving prayer services, both obligatory and sunnah prayers, praying a lot to God Almighty. 1 informant who was a practitioner of one of the congregation, namely sholawat wahidiyah, added activities as a preparation for facing his death by praying a lot to the Prophet Muhammad saw.

There are several other factors that can cause this anxiety, one of which is the situation. According to Hurlock (1990) that if every situation that threatens the existence of organisms can cause anxiety. Anxiety in the heaviest levels is felt as a result of very rapid social change. Efforts that can be made to overcome anxiety in the elderly who experience chronic illness in the face of death include entertaining and calming themselves by singing, praying diligently, and keeping themselves busy.

The theory of posttraumatic growth theory states that when facing a life crisis, especially the death of a loved one, it will lead to positive self-change, such as respecting life more, being able to prioritize life goals, and better interpersonal relationships (Furer & Walker, 2008). Anxiety about death will then become weaker because of the process of self-change in a positive

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direction. Research (Benton et al., 2006) looks at how anxiety about aging affects anxiety about death. The results of his research show that the dimensions of aging anxiety can positively be used to predict death. In other words, anxiety about aging can be used to measure anxiety about death.

CONCLUSION

Based on research that has been conducted using the interview method, it can be concluded that excessive anxiety about death can lead to physical and psychological problems in the elderly. Researchers advise related parties to provide good care for the elderly in the process of facing death that will be passed, because good care at the end of life greatly affects the quality of life of the elderly.

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