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## DOES LIVING ARRANGEMENT DETERMINE MENTAL HEALTH PROFILE AMONG THE ELDERLY?: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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Co-residence of elderly parents with children and grandchildren is believed to be rewarding for satisfactory intergenerational relation. This is very much common in the Indian society. However, the percentage of elderly persons living alone has increased during the past few decades, especially in the urban locales in India. The present study is aimed to evaluate the mental health profile in terms of selected mental health traits in order to examine the relationship between living arrangements and mental health profile of the elderly living in a city and a rural locale in the Indian State of West Bengal. The study is conducted among middle class, educated economically stable Bengalis inhabiting the Salt Lake City, Kolkata and their less-educated, less-economically stable rural counterparts in Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, India. The study sample consists of 450 elderly of both sexes aged between 65 and 79 years. Information on mental health traits and type of living arrangement is obtained using interviewer-administered questionnaires. The results clearly indicates the relatively worsened mental health profile of the urban elderly irrespective of sex living in the extended families, measured in terms of loneliness, anxiety, depression, perceived stress, and quality of life compared with those living in nuclear families. Living arrangement, however, doesn't significantly affect mental health among the rural elderly. The present study interestingly demonstrates the negative aspects of living with children and grandchildren in terms of relative mental health adversity of the elderly in an urban Indian setting, contrary to general expectation in the Indian society.

### Biography

Barun Mukhopadhyay has obtained his Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1989 from the University of Calcutta and working at the faculty of the Indian Statistical Institute since 1991. His major areas of interest are aging studies and bioethics. He has published so far 67 papers in reputed journals and conference proceedings. He serves as the consulting/ Associate editor of two international journals.

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