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INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION AMONG THE RURAL AGED IN MALAYSIA

In Malaysia the family has been the main institution caring for the aged. However, the processes of development, directly or indirectly, have impacted the size, functions and structure of the family unit, which subsequently impacted the family intergenerational relationships and communication. This study is about the intergenerational relationships and communication specifically among the rural aged with their family members. The main objective is to further understand the relationship of the aged with those around them and its contribution to productive and quality ageing process. Survey was the main method used in the study and was conducted among 200 older persons residing in the rural area of mukim Sungai Petani, in the district of Kuala Muda, Kedah, Malaysia. A total of 186 co-residing adult children were also interviewed. The study shows that the intergenerational relationship is still stable and harmonious. The study also shows that the family structure in the area is mainly extended rather than nuclear with the family members exchanging mutual support. In fact, family and kinship network have remain important support network for the families. Generally, the children show positive and responsible attitudes towards their parents. This is in line with our Malaysian culture that places importance on good and close relationships between generations.