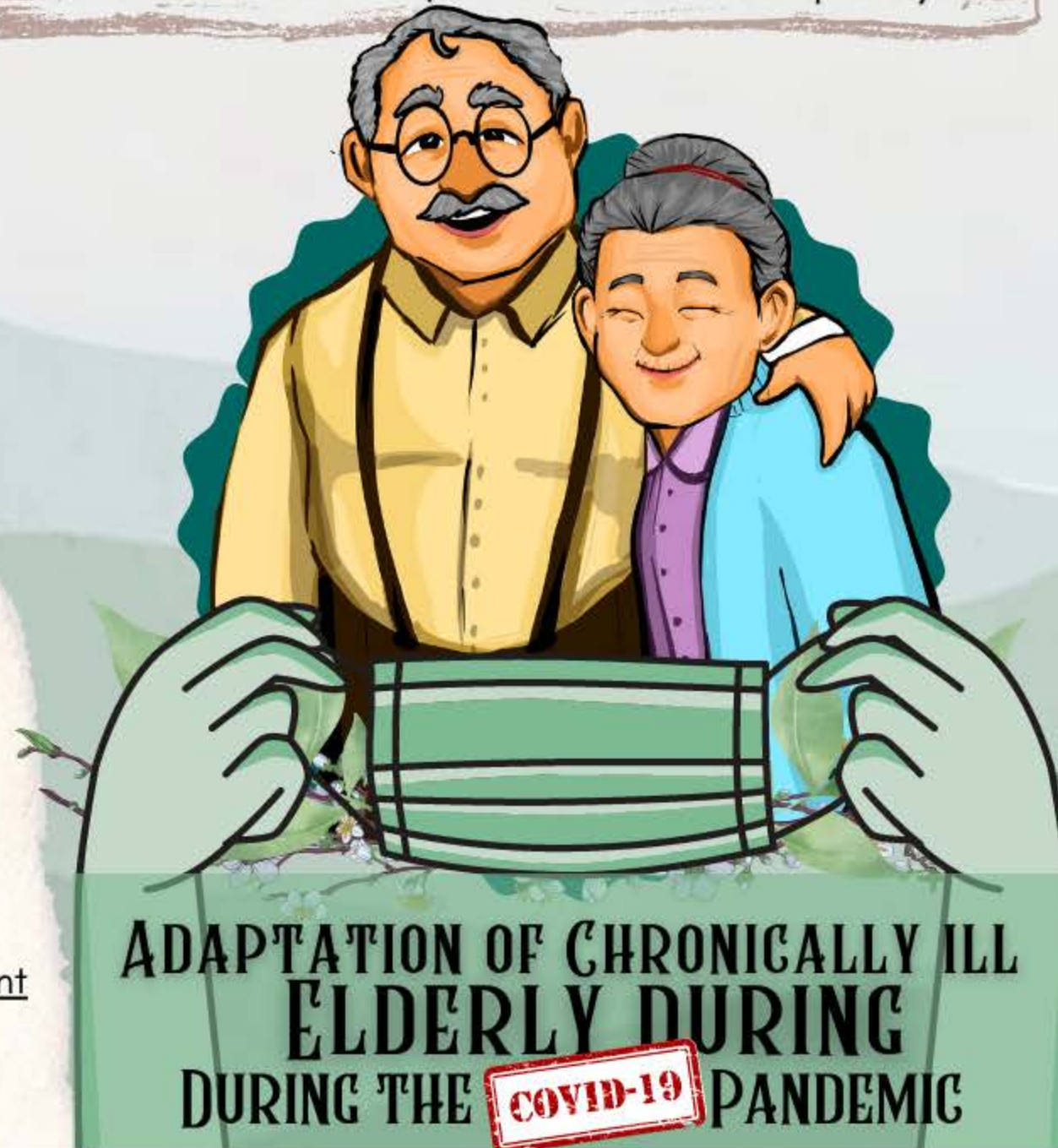


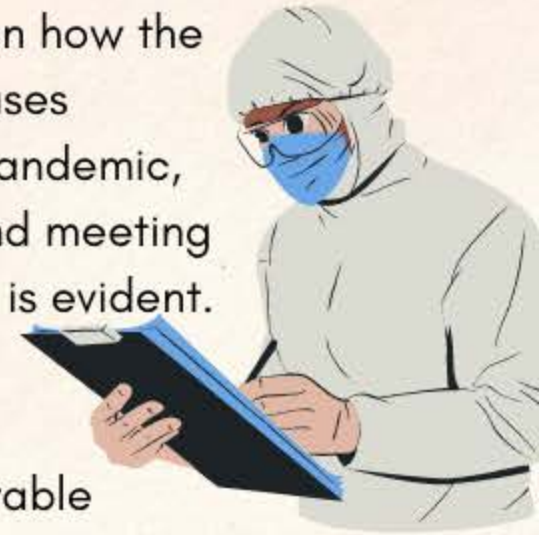
## Background

- The elderly by virtue of their age are considered a **vulnerable population** and are also considered among those at greatest risk with the Corona Virus 2019. The **risk increases with age**, with the oldest elderly at greatest susceptibility and most especially those with existing chronic illness.
- Importantly, **the physical distancing** as well as other **COVID-19 protocols** have been presenting important challenges to the health and well-being of the elderly.
- With most of the social-relations and activities suspended due to quarantine restrictions, the elderly's social isolation could lead to **feelings of loneliness, loss of social role, lifestyle, freedom, autonomy, privacy, and other aspects**. These feelings may **result in an inability to adapt** to the new environment, precipitating potential consequences like **neglecting their health status**.
- Further, not being able to adapt can cause these elders to feel stressed, **lose control over their lives, and lose their identity**.
  - It means that these occurring changes require adaptation or adjustment to complete the development and achievement of self-integrity for these elderly.

The **elderly with chronic illness**, in this study, is defined as older adults aging 60 years and above with a long-term condition that does not get better on its own and/ or is not cured completely.



- The urgency of focusing on how the elderly with chronic diseases respond to the current pandemic, specifically in seeking and meeting their health care needs, is evident.
- Thus, there is a need to study the first-hand experiences of this vulnerable age group to better understand their responses during this pandemic.
- The **inferences from the elderly were perceived relevant with the provision of timely and client-centered care interventions for this vulnerable population group.**



## Purpose

The study aimed to explore how the *elderly with chronic illnesses* are adapting to COVID-19 pandemic.

### Methods

**Tublay, Benguet** has tighten its borders leading to lockdowns and stricter protocols—a **new kind of environment to its community that entails adaptation**, especially the elderly with chronic illness.

### Results

#### Ethical Clearance

Ethical Clearance was secured from the University's Research Ethics Committee

#### Permission

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the municipal government and respective barangay units. COVID-19 public health standards were prioritized in the conduct of the study.

#### Recruitment

Purposeful sampling with eligibility criteria to extract phenomenon from target population was done

#### Data Analysis

Moustakas' Transcendental analysis (*Modified Van Kaam analysis by Moustakas*) was used in data reviewing, transcription, and analysis.

#### The Interview

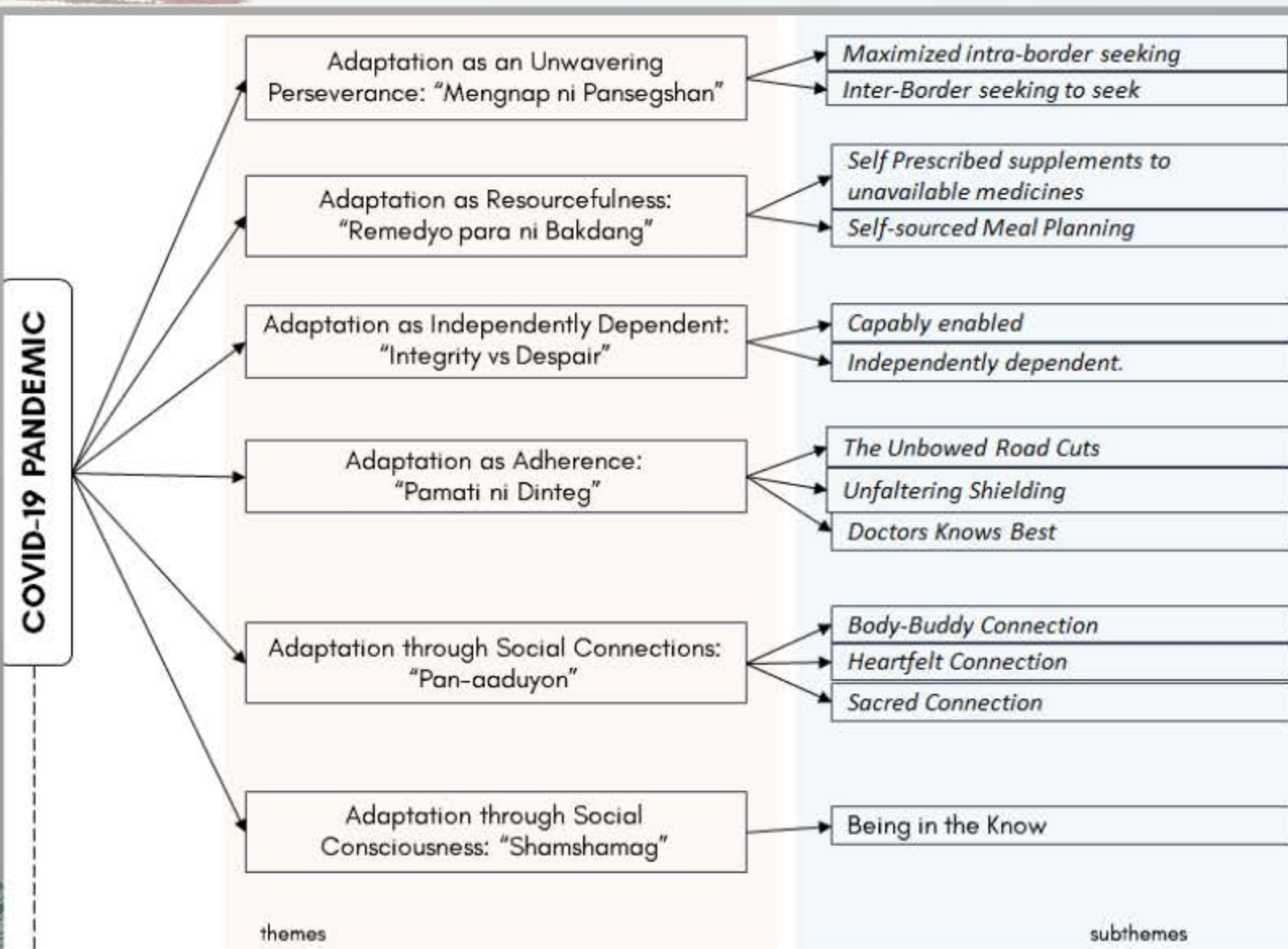
The initial interview went for 45-60mins with follow-up discussions in the participants' place.

#### Informed Consent

All agreements in the ICF were prioritized to protect the vulnerable participants

✓ There were 18 elderly with chronic illness in this study.

📍 Six (6) barangays of Tublay, Benguet.



THE ELDERLY AND THEIR NEEDS

In exploring the experiences of the elderly with chronic illness of Tublay Benguet, it was found that their adaptation is likened and may be viewed as a **Gray owl seated on an Asklepius' Rod.**



- The **cane** helps the elderly with chronic illness have a better balance and to move safely. This represents the elders' independence.
- The **snake** symbolizes the adaptation employed by the elderly towards maintaining their health and well-being especially with the current COVID-19 pandemic—the characteristics of skin shedding representing immortal life, sudden change in activity emphasizing transit from sickness to cure. **They adapt whenever they are in a situation that forces them to be.**

- The **wings** in the Asklepius represents Hermes—the messenger of the gods, for these elders, it represents the news they get which they use in adapting.
- **Like an owl**, the elders are **observant, they learn and understand things by seeing the situation through different aspects**, from the news they get from their family and relatives, community, and the government. They use this in their decision making.
- Owls are used to **symbolize wisdom, fierce intelligence, and regal silence, the elderly too are great thinkers.** They plan their moves from the smallest detail to the biggest. These elders listen and adhere to protocols to help them strategize their moves.
- **Whenever these owls feel threatened**, owls snap their beaks making a hard clacking sound to scare off or intimidate predators. They make their own move. **Just like the elderly, whenever they feel some negative stimuli, they find ways to act out. They also seek help whenever or wherever they need to.**

## Discussion



## Conclusion

**The elderly with chronic illness of Tublay, Benguet have strengthened to adapt to the healthcare changes brought by the COVID-19 as evidenced by their positive self-care practices and healthcare behaviors.** However, it should also be noted that they had but are still adapting to the protocols, as protocols change every now and then. Thus, they need to be constantly updated and involved to decide on their care and welfare. The high level of consistency and agreement across the participants suggests that the experiences told by these elders may be generic and relevant, as well, to the other elders with chronic disease in different communities.

“**The elderly with chronic illness looks for remedies and other ways to fight the stimuli. They persevere in doing what they can, with great optimism, so that they may be able to adapt to the constant changes, especially for their health.**”

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