

Commonwealth, Richmond, Virginia, United States, 2. Richmond City Health District, Richmond, Virginia, United States

Older adults who experience social isolation have higher rates of mortality relative to their counterparts. Social interactions are an important way to combat this isolation. This research aims to better understand how social isolation in older adults living in low-income households in Richmond, Virginia (RVA) is related to their economic, physical, and psychological health status. As part of the VCU iCubed Health and Wellness Aging Core and in collaboration with the Richmond Memorial: East End Housing Coalition for Older Adults, older adults from a selected public housing unit (n=28) self-reported their financial status, experiences with physical and psycho-social health, and feelings of social isolation. Survey participants were 71.4% female, the mean age was 69.75 years, and 25% were high school graduates. Participants averaged 34 years living in the area and reported an average of \$300 to spend on rent monthly. Overall, 55% (n=20) reported having two or more supports and 61% (n=22) reported hardly ever feeling isolated. However, a small subset of the sample reported having either no supports (5.6%, n=2) and 41.7% (n=15) lacked companionship some of the time or often. A one-way ANOVA was conducted and it was determined that participants who reported feeling left out more often were significantly more likely to report stress, anxiety, and depression ($F[2, 25] = 6.998$). Findings support the existence of supportive communities formed in low-income areas. Findings also indicate some older individuals residing in public housing in RVA experience social isolation, linking them to poorer psycho-social health.

IMPACT OF OFFLINE AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS ON LONELINESS AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG ITALIAN OLDER PEOPLE

Daniele Zaccaria,¹ Georgia Casanova,¹ and Antonio Guaita¹, *1. Golgi Cenci Foundation, Abbiategrasso, Italy*

In the last decades the study of older people and social networks has been at the core of gerontology research. The literature underlines the positive health effects of traditional and online social connections and also the social networks' positive impact on cognitive performance, mental health and quality of life. Aging in a Networked Society is a randomized controlled study aimed at investigating causal impact of traditional face-to-face social networks and online social networks (e.g. Social Network Sites) on older people' health, cognitive functions and well-being. A social experiment, based on a pre-existing longitudinal study (InveCe - Brain Aging in Abbiategrasso) has involved 180 older people born from 1935 to 1939 living in Abbiategrasso, a municipality near Milan. We analyse effects on health and well-being of smartphones and Facebook use (compared to engagement in a more traditional face-to-face activity), exploiting the research potential of past waves of InveCe study, which collected information concerning physical, cognitive and mental health using international validate scale, blood samples, genetic markers and information on social networks and socio-demographic characteristics of all participants. Results of statistical analysis show that poor social relations and high level of perceived loneliness (measured by Lubben

Scale and UCLA Loneliness scale) affect negatively physical and mental outcomes. We also found that gender and marital status mediate the relationship between loneliness and mental wellbeing, while education has not significant effect. Moreover, trial results underline the causal impact of ICT use (smartphones, internet, social network sites) on self-perceived loneliness and cognitive and physical health.

LONELINESS PREDICTS REDUCTIONS IN SLEEP QUALITY IN OLDER AMERICANS

Sarah Griffin,¹ Baylor Williams,¹ Scott Ravyts,¹ Joseph Dzierzewski,¹ and Bruce Rybarczyk¹, *1. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, United States*

Research documenting loneliness as a factor predicting health decline accumulates, yet the mechanisms underlying this relationship remain obscure. A potential mechanism is sleep disturbance, which is associated with loneliness. However, it remains unclear whether loneliness is a risk factor for subsequent sleep disturbance. The present study aimed to examine loneliness (measured via the Hughes Loneliness Scale) as a risk factor for sleep disturbance in a nationally representative sample of older (>65) Americans. Weighted linear regressions (accounting for complex sampling) were conducted on data from the Health and Retirement Study (n=3,042; 2006 & 2012 waves). Higher levels of loneliness in 2006 predicted sleep disturbance in 2014 when controlling for baseline sleep ($B=.08$, 95% confidence interval [CI]=[.04, .13]). This association remained after controlling for age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, net worth, and depressive symptoms ($B=.07$, 95% CI=[.04, .11]). These results identify loneliness as a risk factor for sleep disturbance over an eight-year span in older Americans. Further research is necessary to tease apart this relationship: specifically, to assess reciprocal effects over multiple timepoints, investigate the role of depression in loneliness and sleep disturbance, and employ experimental methods to address causality.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD DANGER ON OLDER ADULTS' FUNCTIONAL STATUS

Ilana J. Engel,¹ and Tamara A. Baker¹, *1. University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, United States*

Social isolation is often associated with smaller social networks, bereavement, and chronic health problems. In addition, underserved neighborhoods, without the resources and social support of other areas, may further promote social isolation among older adults. This study utilized data from the 2nd wave of the nationally representative National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP) to examine if perceived neighborhood danger mediates the relationship between social isolation and functional impairment. We hypothesized that those who are less socially connected and feel less safe in their communities may experience worse health outcomes. Data for the total sample (N=1,804; 62-91 years of age) showed that partial mediation was supported, ($F 2, 1801 = 22.91$, $p<0.01$). Similar statistics were found by gender (men, $F 2, 985 = 8.20$, $p<0.01$; women, $F 2, 813 = 14.79$, $p<0.01$). This relationship, however, showed a stronger association among women ($\beta = -.39$, $p<0.01$) than men ($\beta = -.26$, $p<0.05$). Findings indicate that the relationship

between perceived social isolation and impaired functional status may be partially explained by perceived neighborhood danger. These findings suggest that older adults who perceive their neighborhoods as dangerous, may be more socially isolated, and at risk for functional decline. These results support the Reserve Capacity Model, which posits that social resources are of increased importance for socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals. Additional research is needed to examine how such factors as stress, environment, and access to care contribute to our understanding of health outcomes among this population of adults.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE PET EFFECT

Judith Robertson R. Phillips,¹ Edith Jimenez,¹ and Heather Nicholson¹, 1. *California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, California, United States*

Social capital such as positive relationships and social support play an important role in older adults' well-being. Typically, researchers have investigated family and friends as providers of interpersonal resources to older adults but there has been an increasing trend to explore companion pets as providers of social capital and to investigate the impact of pet companionship on older adults' psychological well-being. Inconsistencies have appeared in the literature though as to whether there is a "pet effect," the positive benefit of companion pets on older adults' psychological health. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether having a companion pet would provide greater social connection and better psychological well-being among 83 community-residing older adults (meanage = 62.87 years; males = 38; females = 45) who owned a companion pet, a dog (n= 53), cat, (n= 21) or both (n= 9), versus 42 community-residing older adults (meanage = 65.69 years; males = 25; females = 17) who didn't own companion pets. Analyses revealed that no "pet effect" was found for any measure of psychological well-being: self-reported loneliness, happiness, life satisfaction, or mental health. This was especially true for cat owners in that the more one viewed a cat as a family member, the lower one's life satisfaction and happiness. In addition, as the number of cats in the household increased, the perceived social support from a significant other, family, and friends lowered. Discussion will focus on the implications of these results for pets as providers of social capital.

IMPACT OF ICT AND SOCIAL NETWORKS SITES UTILIZATION ON OLDER PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING AND LONELINESS: A SCOPING REVIEW

Daniele Zaccaria,¹ Georgia Casanova,¹ and Antonio Guaita¹, 1. *Golgi Cenci Foundation, Abbiategrasso, Italy*

In the last decade the debate on ageing issues has been powered by the relationship between older people wellbeing, loneliness, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Networks Sites (SNSs). A scoping review on social experiment studies, analysing the casual effect of technologies use on older adults' wellbeing and loneliness, has been realized to support the randomized controlled trial included in "Aging in a Networked Society" project. The study aims to review the social experiments on the relationship between technology-use, older people wellbeing and loneliness, to provide a critical analysis of studies, to

underline drivers and barriers in existing literature and to provide recommendations for future study and policy. 133 papers have been selected using interdisciplinary search engines (Scopus, Pubmed, Web of sciences, Google Scholar), taking into account contents and methods used. An in-depth examination of 9 experiences of social experiment have been provided, focused on six dimensions: "aims", "design", "sampling", "intervention", "findings" and "limitations". The literature show the positive effects of ICT, internet and SNSs use on older people wellbeing and quality of life. Our review underlines how the older people shown interest in ICT use to support their social relations, and how it should become a social driver. The low widespread of experimental studies impacts on the literature evidences. The main limits are related to the recruitment and sampling. Social experiment practices, based on controlled randomized trial, should be widespread to better support the evidences in ageing issue.

LONELINESS SHAPES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ICT USE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Yang Fang,¹ Anson Chau,² Helene H. Fung,² and Jean Woo³, 1. *Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore*, 2. *Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*, 3. *The Chinese University of Hong Kong, New Territories, Hong Kong*

Background: Given findings that generally support the benefits of information and communication technology (ICT) for older adults' psychosocial adjustment, one might surmise that lonely older adults, who have a stronger need for psychological support, would reap more psychosocial benefits from ICT use. However, scant research has examined this view, much less the likelihood that ICT use might worsen the psychological well-being of lonely older adults, as has been shown to be the case in younger adults. Objective: To examine whether the association between ICT use and psychological adjustment (i.e., psychological distress and sense of community [SOC]) among older adults depends on their loneliness levels. Methods: A representative sample of 738 Hong Kong SAR Chinese older adults aged 60 years or older (56% female) was interviewed in 2017 on loneliness, frequency of ICT use (i.e., Internet and smart devices), psychological distress (6-item Kessler scale; K6), and SOC. Results: Regression analyses showed that loneliness significantly moderated the relationship between ICT use frequency and psychological adjustment (psychological distress and SOC); more frequent ICT use was associated with more psychological distress and less SOC, with higher levels of loneliness. Conclusion: These findings suggest that ICT use may be a mixed blessing for older adults, i.e., using more ICT might predict worse psychological adjustment among lonelier older adults. Efforts that promote ICT use among older adults should take their loneliness levels into account.

DETECTION OF DEPRESSION USING THE UCLA THREE-ITEM LONELINESS SCALE IN OLDER CHINESE

Tianyin Liu,¹ Gloria H.Y. Wong,¹ Jennifer Y.M. Tang,² Shiyu Lu,¹ Dara Leung,¹ Lesley Sze,¹ Joyce Sing,¹ and Terry Lum³, 1. *The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*, 2. *Sau Po Centre on Ageing, The University of*