

settings. Our findings thereby indicate that these online tools can reliably measure cognitive functioning across the life-span at a reduced cost, which may help detect individuals at risk of developing age-related cognitive disorders.

## SESSION 5525 (SYMPOSIUM)

### CONTEXTUAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS RELEVANT TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND WHITE ADULT POPULATIONS

Chair: Angela Sardina

Co-Chair: Adrienne Aiken-Morgan

Discussant: Alyssa Gamaldo

With the burgeoning older adult population, there will be an increased demand for neighborhood and housing developments conducive to the interests and needs of older adults from diverse backgrounds of varying health and functional status. Several initiatives have sought to develop age-friendly neighborhoods, which focused on improving access and affordability of community resources. However, limited effort has focused on physical and social attributes of immediate housing environments, particularly amongst lower-income older adults. The need for affordable and usable housing developments for older adults that provide greater opportunities for social engagement, social services, and convenience to neighborhood resources (e.g., grocery stores, healthcare) will continue to rise. The objectives of the proposed symposium are the following: (1) to explore the physical and social attributes of older and low-income residents' housing and their surrounding community; and (2) discuss how older and low-income residents' housing and community resources relates to their health and well-being. This symposium will include presentations from three pilot investigations that highlight relevant subjective and objective contextual metrics related to health and well-being in underserved older populations. Tan and colleagues explored the role of well-being (i.e., purpose in life) in the relationships among sociodemographics, health, housing and community resources. Sardina and colleagues explored perceived leisure barriers and their relationship to sociodemographic, health, and psychosocial characteristics. Aiken-Morgan and colleagues examined associations between neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage and health status among low-income African American older adults. Wright and colleagues explored associations between neighborhood disadvantage, brain health, and neurocognitive function in cognitively normal older adults.

### POSITIVE ROLE OF PURPOSE IN LIFE IN HEALTH OUTCOMES AND PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENT

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Having a sense of purpose directs behaviors, hence, purpose in life (PIL) can be a useful indicator/moderator of healthy mental and physical behaviors and outcomes. As such, purpose in life, particularly in lower income older adults, might encourage meaningful engagement in activities and life that lead to positive health. Thirty-nine residents

( $M=68.01$ ,  $SD=10.26$ ) of affordable housing for older adults in Wilmington, NC and State College, PA were surveyed on demographics, mental health, well-being (i.e., PIL), health behaviors, and their perceptions on immediate housing and the community resources. Findings suggest that for higher educated, younger and Black older adults, PIL moderates or protects against negative mental outcomes ( $p<.05$ ). For higher educated older adults, PIL moderates or encourages positive perception of job opportunities in the community ( $p<.05$ ) and healthier behaviors ( $p<.05$ ). More research is needed to understand how environment interacts with PIL to promote healthy behaviors and outcomes.

### LEISURE BARRIERS AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN LOW-INCOME HOUSING: DEMOGRAPHIC, HEALTH, AND CONTEXTUAL CORRELATES

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Despite increased research pertaining to the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial benefits of leisure engagement, few studies have explored leisure barriers experienced by older adults residing in subsidized housing, and how these barriers relate to sociodemographic, health, and psychosocial characteristics. Thirty-nine Black and White residents ( $M=68.01$ ,  $SD=10.26$ ) from two subsidized housing communities (Wilmington, NC and State College, PA) were surveyed as part of the Tailoring Environments for Active Life Engagement study. Findings indicated that lack of available activities and low awareness of activities, limited social connections, and transportation were the most common barriers identified. Additionally, individuals with lesser years of education and poorer quality of education, worse mental and physical health, poorer cognitive function, as well as those experiencing loneliness and social isolation reported significantly more leisure barriers ( $ps <.05$ ). More research is needed that examines micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors associated with leisure participation for older low-income housing residents.

### NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIOECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE AND HEALTH STATUS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS LIVING IN LOW-INCOME HOUSING

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Research has shown the importance of social determinants of health in explaining racial/ethnic disparities in many health outcomes; however, less attention has been given to within-group differences in social determinants of health among low-income African American older adults. The Physical and Cognitive Health Pilot Study ( $n=50$ ) was utilized to examine associations between level of neighborhood