

women and increases with advanced age; in the US, an estimated 4.3 million older adults continue to live alone with cognitive impairment or dementia. We will present research from the US and Mexico on the receipt of long-term services and supports and unmet needs for care among older adults living alone, including with cognitive impairment, as well as factors that may modify these outcomes. For the US, we will describe recent findings about the health, health care, and caregiving outcomes of older adults living alone vs. living with others during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FRAMING BINATIONAL CHALLENGES OF MENTAL AND COGNITIVE HEALTH CARE IN MEXICAN-ORIGIN OLDER ADULTS: CONSENSUS FINDINGS

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Growth in older populations, and hence in the number of persons living with dementia, is particularly rapid for individuals of Mexican origin living in the U.S. and Mexico. In order to identify influences on cognitive health in this diverse population, the University Texas at Austin and Mexican National Institute of Geriatrics (INGER) organized their second Bridging Conference titled: "Framing Challenges of Cognitive and Mental Health Care in Mexican-origin Older Adults in Mexico and the U.S.". In this presentation, we highlight the results of a consensus-building session, during which bi-national expert opinions were generated and synthesized addressing gaps in research, knowledge, and policy, as well as the setting of priorities for immediate action and future research. Reducing barriers to adequate care for those aging-in-place with dementia was a central theme of the identified priorities. Critical areas of identified need, more specifically, included reducing social isolation, caregiver burden, and diminishing retirement income.

LIVING BEYOND 80: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF COGNITIVE AND IADL DISABLEMENT AMONG THE OLDEST MEXICAN AMERICANS

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Mexican Americans live longer on average than other ethnic groups, but often with protracted cognitive and physical disability. Little is known, however, about the role of cognitive decline for transitions in IADL disability and tertiary outcomes of the IADL disablement for the oldest old. We employ the Hispanic Established Populations for the Epidemiologic Study of the Elderly (2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2016, N=1,078) to investigate the longitudinal patterns of IADL decline using Latent Transition Analysis. Three IADL groups were identified: independent (developing mobility limitations), emerging dependence (limited mobility and community activities), and dependent (limited mobility and household and community activities). Declines in cognitive function were a consistent

predictor of greater IADL disablement, and loneliness was a particularly salient distal outcome for emerging dependence. These results highlight the social consequences of cognitive decline and dependency as well as underscore important areas of intervention at each stage of the disablement process.

Session 4190 (Paper)

Cognition, Sensory Impairment, and Communication

BILINGUALISM AND HEALTHY AGING: ONSET AGE OF BILINGUALISM AS A PREDICTOR OF OLDER ADULT THEORY OF MIND

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The ability to understand and speak more than one language (i.e., bilingualism) may protect against age-related cognitive deterioration (Abutalebi et al., 2015). While there is mounting evidence suggesting that bilingualism confers advantages in domain-general cognitive abilities in late adulthood (see Bialystok, 2017, for a review), few studies have investigated the influences of bilingualism on socio-cognitive abilities such as theory of mind (ToM) in the normal aging process. Thus, in this study, we examine how bilingualism factors (i.e., onset age of bilingualism, language balance, and diversity in language use) are associated with individual differences in ToM in healthy older adult bilinguals aged 58-79 (N=44). ToM abilities were assessed using the Theory-of-Mind Task Battery (Hutchins et al., 2008), where participants viewed vignettes and answered questions about the protagonists' cognitive and affective mental states. All participants completed a self-report language background questionnaire and the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) test as a measure of general cognitive ability. Results revealed that better ToM was negatively correlated with participants' chronological age ($r=-.43, p=.004$) and the onset age of second-language acquisition ($r=-.41, p=.006$), but not language balance and diversity ($ps>.40$). Partial regression analyses showed that earlier onset age of bilingualism predicted better ToM performance ($\beta=-.40, p=.009$), even after controlling for age, education, and general cognitive ability. These findings suggest that bilingual language experience, particularly earlier exposure to a second language, may provide benefits to older adults in preserving their ability to understand others' mental states, acting as a cognitive reserve against age-related declines in socio-cognitive functions.

EXAMINING THE COMBINED ESTIMATED EFFECTS OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND DEPRESSION ON COGNITIVE DECLINE AND DEMENTIA

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Late-life depression is a comorbidity which may co-occur in older adults with hearing loss- each as prevalent and