

Older Americans Act (OAA) family caregiver services connect family members caring for older adults with a diversity of community-based resources and supports. Social isolation and loneliness are known public health threats, and family caregivers may face greater vulnerability to loneliness given the often-intensive time demands of care provision. Policy stakeholders and aging services providers are increasingly focused on combating loneliness among older adults and family caregivers. To inform efforts to reduce loneliness, we conducted descriptive analyses to identify characteristics of the participants in the OAA National Family Caregiver Support Program associated with higher rates of loneliness, measured with the 3-item UCLA Loneliness Scale. Using data from the 2019 National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants, we examined how caregiver loneliness varied based on caregiver age, gender, income, race and ethnicity, living alone, rurality, and self-reported health, as well as care recipients' health status and difficulties with ADLs. Among our sample of 1,824 family caregivers, rates of loneliness were high overall (70%). Loneliness was significantly higher for caregivers with poor health (71.4%), incomes less than \$20,000 (75.3%), living alone (75.4%), aged 65 or older (73.2%), Hispanic caregivers (82.2%) and caregivers for care recipients with 3 or more ADLs (76.0%). Findings underscore the importance of increasing social engagement opportunities for family caregivers. Policies and programs focused on reducing caregiver loneliness should be accessible to all family caregivers but should prioritize outreach and engagement for groups at higher risk of loneliness.

IMPACT OF IN2L TABLETS ON LONELINESS AND WELL-BEING: FINDINGS OF AN INNOVATIVE INDUSTRY-AAA PROGRAM

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Area Agency on Aging (AAA) senior and adult day centers closed due to COVID-19, causing many older adults to lose an important source of connection and engagement, leading to social isolation. To combat negative consequences, iN2L and a Florida AAA partnered on an innovative program providing iN2L tablets to AAA-supported older adults to use at home. The tablets have a simple interface, content specifically designed for older adults (e.g., games; music; movies), and video call capability. Participants included 51 independent older adults (mean age 77) and 39 family caregivers (mean age 59) of people with dementia. Participants completed phone surveys with AAA case managers at baseline and 3 months, including UCLA Loneliness Scale (3 item) and questions about their tablet experiences. Findings show positive trends for loneliness and well-being in both groups. At 3 months, lonely participants decreased from baseline by 25% for independent older adults and 18% for family caregivers. Over 80% of independent older adults agreed the tablet engages them in meaningful activities, provides daily enjoyment, and helps with relaxation. For family caregivers, 79% agreed the tablet is another tool in their caregiver toolkit and about 70% agreed the tablet adds daily enjoyment, helps with relaxation, and provides engagement in meaningful

activities for their family member. Approximately 50% of caregivers felt happier, less stressed, and less irritable since using the tablets. This work has implications for the utility of technology in promoting engagement and connection, alleviating negative effects of social isolation, and the effectiveness of industry-AAA partnerships.

IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON OLDER ADULTS' SOCIAL ISOLATION

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The risk of COVID-19 exposure and likelihood of severe illness have been critical concerns among older adults during the pandemic. Meanwhile, social distancing has worsened social isolation, with severe impacts on connectedness among seniors. Effects of the pandemic may lead to an extended crisis, with impacts on health outcomes. Our primary purpose was to summarize emerging research describing impacts of the pandemic on social isolation and related health outcomes among older adults. A streamlined search was conducted to fit the scope of this review, with key terms determined to identify relevant publications. Common research databases and mainstream resources were utilized. We focused on research published or released since the start of 2020, primarily rapidly reviewed studies, to align with the timing of the pandemic. Early research suggests that the pandemic has worsened social isolation among older adults. Social isolation is now more urgent, as many seniors lost their usual connections due to social distancing. While these measures help to prevent virus exposure, this approach must be balanced with maintaining social connectedness. Thus, a "COVID-19 paradox" has emerged: safety protocols protect older adults but concurrently place them at risk of social isolation. Adapted approaches are urgently needed to safely address the consequences of a potential long-term social recession.

IN VIVO QUASI-ELASTIC LIGHT SCATTERING EYE SCANNER DETECTS MOLECULAR AGING IN HUMANS AND MICE

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The absence of clinical tools to evaluate individual variation in the pace of aging represents a major impediment to understanding aging and maximizing health throughout life. The lens is an ideal tissue for quantitative assessment of molecular aging in vivo. Long-lived proteins in lens fiber cells are expressed during fetal life, do not undergo turnover, accumulate molecular alterations throughout life, and are optically accessible in vivo. We used quasi-elastic light scattering (QLS) to measure age-dependent signals in lenses of both healthy human subjects and wild-type C57BL/6 mice. Age-dependent QLS signal changes detected in vivo in humans and mice recapitulated time-dependent changes in hydrodynamic radius, protein polydispersity, and supra-molecular order of human lens proteins during long-term incubation (~1 year) and in response to sustained oxidation