

LISTENING TO OLDER ADULTS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ADVICE GIVEN DURING COVID-19

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The life experience of older adults offers a unique perspective of coping through historical crises. Specific advice offered by older adults is generally underrepresented in the literature. This qualitative study explores advice offered by older adults to others on how to cope through the COVID-19 pandemic as well as advice for the community about the needs of older adults. A Midwestern sample of 67 older adults aged 70-97 completed one phone interview in June of 2020 as part of a larger study about their experiences with social distancing and isolation. Participants were asked what advice they would give to others during the pandemic and what advice they would give to communities and families about the needs of older adults during the pandemic. Transcripts of these conversations were coded using in vivo and holistic coding as first-cycle methods. These codes were then analyzed using pattern coding as a second-cycle method. Results indicated older adults offered advice along three domains: fostering physical and mental wellbeing, promoting positive life perspectives, and maintaining connections. Advice to communities regarding the needs of older adults included having a selfless attitude and taking intentional actions like grocery shopping and writing letters. However, older adults also recommended avoiding extremes to allow them to maintain their independence and preserve physical distance for safety. Older adults utilized their life perspective and their own coping strategies when offering advice. Future research should evaluate the effectiveness of the advice given and how likely that the advice will be utilized by others.

NATIVE AMERICAN ELDERS' EXPERIENCES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CASE STUDIES

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The COVID-19 pandemic has affected community-dwelling elder adults' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. We report 4 case studies of Native American elders' pandemic experience. Participants were recruited from community-dwelling older adults in Central Texas. Data collection took place via in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews during June-August 2020. Four of the participants self-identified as Native American. Three of them were male; between the ages of 74 and 75; had at least some college education. The fourth Native American elder was a 68 year-old female with some college education. All four participants were coping well with everyday life during the pandemic. Connectedness emerged as the overarching theme among the

4 cases. Regular communication with their families was expressed as most important. A variety of communication technology was used to maintain contact with family members such as phone calls, texting, email, and video chat services particularly Zoom, FaceTime, and Facebook Video Chat. Challenges with using these technologies were also frequently reported. The participants expressed they did not feel a sense of increased loneliness or loss of being connected. Another theme emerged related to surviving the impact of the pandemic. Having the vaccine accessible along with financial resources necessary to sustain essential needs were most frequently expressed by the participants. These findings have implications for community interventions and policies that support the provision of mechanisms for Native American elders to maintain a sense of connectedness, including the adoption and use of communication technology, during times of crises such as pandemics and natural disasters.

PERCEIVED FEAR OF COVID-19 AMONG NEPALI OLDER ADULTS

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Although coronavirus-disease-2019 (COVID-19) impacted everyone in some ways, it disproportionately impacted the older population. Given their increased vulnerability to severe illness and mortality, the ongoing pandemic has created greater distress, anxiety, and fear among the older population. In Nepal, a South Asian country nestled in the Himalayas between India and China, most stories of older adults are untold—both in the pre-COVID-19 and the COVID-19 era. This study aimed to explore the perceived fear of COVID-19 among Nepali older adults. A cross-sectional study was conducted between July-September 2020 among 847 older adults (≥60 years) residing in three districts of eastern Nepal. The seven-item Fear of COVID-19 Scale assessed the perceived fear of COVID-19; higher scores on the scale (ranges 7 to 35 indicated greater fear. A sizeable proportion of the participants' reported being afraid (35%), anxious (32%), uncomfortable (24%), clammy (14%), and sleepless (12%), while 28% were fearful of losing their life due to COVID-19. In adjusted regression analysis, older age group, Dalit (minority) ethnicity, and remoteness to the health facility were associated with greater fear of COVID-19. Surprisingly, pre-existing health conditions were inversely associated with fear of COVID-19. Greater fear of COVID-19 amidst the pandemic, although anticipated, urges us to reflect on the most vulnerable groups' psychological needs not just during COVID-19 but in the future events of pandemics and public health emergencies. Fear during emergencies could be battled with accurate and effective information as well as better preparedness and psychosocial interventions.