

search for purpose in life, and reduced purpose in life is ultimately associated with poorer subjective health and increased functional limitations.

SESSION 725 (SYMPOSIUM)

ESPO/BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, ISOLATION, AND WELL-BEING

Chair: Jeffrey E. Stokes, *University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts, United States*

Co-Chair: Elliane Irani, *Case Western Reserve University, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Cleveland, Ohio, United States*

Discussant: Patricia A. Thomas, *Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, Ohio, United States*

The purpose of this symposium is twofold: (1) To present innovative research linking social relationships, isolation, and well-being among older adults, and (2) To highlight new and emerging scholars in the Behavioral and Social Sciences section of GSA. The papers in this symposium examine the repercussions of numerous relationships for well-being in later life. Huo and colleagues examine the impacts of contact with close and not-close social partners on physical activity, highlighting differences by gender. Polenick and colleagues focus on perhaps the closest of relationships in later life: marriage, analyzing longitudinal associations between discordant chronic conditions and depressive symptoms among older couples. Upenieks takes an intergenerational perspective, examining the embeddedness of adult children in older adults' networks in the context of both depression onset and chronically high depressive symptomology. This paper also highlights the consequences of well-being for older adults' social isolation, and not merely the reverse. Hladek and colleagues explore the subjective side of isolation among older adults with chronic disease, noting links between loneliness and self-efficacy that may have clinical and interventional significance. Lastly, Meinertz and Gilligan explore potential gaps in service provision that may increase rural older adults' risk of isolation and abuse. Taken together, these five papers underscore the importance of various social relationships for older adults' well-being, and suggest implications for how best to promote healthy aging. As discussant, Thomas will assess the strengths and limitations of these papers, and consider the contributions these studies – and new scholars – can make to the field.

HIS AND HER EVERYDAY LIFE: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN OLDER ADULTS' SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Meng Huo,¹ Karen L. Fingerma,¹ Yee To Ng¹, *1. The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, United States*

The literature links social integration to better physical health, but little research asks how contact with diverse social partners influences older adults' physical activity in a daily context. We examined this link using the Daily Experiences and Well-being Study and explored whether this link varied by gender. The sample included 175 older women and 138 older men who reported their contact with close partners (e.g., family/friend) and not-close partners (e.g., acquaintances) throughout each day across 5 days. Participants also wore Actical accelerometers to track physical activity. Multilevel models revealed significant gender differences.

Older men had reduced physical activity when having contact with close partners, whereas older women maintained physical activity during such contact. Both older men and women had increased physical activity when having contact with not-close partners, but this link was stronger for men. This study advances our understanding of gender differences in older adults' social experiences and well-being.

DISCORDANT CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG MIDDLE-AGED AND OLDER COUPLES

Courtney A. Polenick,¹ Kira S. Birditt,¹ Angela Turkelson,¹ Benjamin Bugajski,¹ and Helen C. Kales¹, *1. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States*

Discordant chronic conditions (i.e., those with competing management requirements) have adverse consequences for well-being, yet little is known about their implications among couples. We evaluated how depressive symptoms are linked to discordant conditions within individuals and between spouses across an 8-year period. The U.S. sample included 1,116 middle-aged and older couples from five waves (2006 – 2014) of the Health and Retirement Study. Longitudinal actor-partner interdependence models controlled for age, minority status, education, depressive symptoms in the previous wave, and each partner's report of baseline marital quality and number of chronic conditions in each wave. Wives and husbands with their own discordant conditions reported higher depressive symptoms, and this association intensified over time. Over and above this link, husbands had higher depressive symptoms when there were discordant conditions between spouses. Both individual-level and couple-level discordant chronic conditions appear to have enduring implications for depressive symptoms in middle and later life.

HOW DO MENTAL HEALTH TRANSITIONS SHAPE THE ROLE OF ADULT CHILDREN IN OLDER ADULTS' SOCIAL NETWORKS?

Laura Upenieks¹, *1. University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, Canada*

This study considers the role of adult children in the core networks of older adults undergoing mental health change. Taking a multidimensional perspective of the network system, I consider (a) presence of child(ren), (b) contact with children network members, and (c) embeddedness of children within the network using longitudinal data from the United States. Parameters were estimated with generalized estimating equations from the pooled panel data. There was no evidence that mental health transitions lead to systematic forms of child reshuffling or increased contact with child ties. Children that remained in networks, however, showed increased contact with other members of the network when the parent underwent depression onset, but became less embedded when their parents had chronically high levels of depression. These patterns may have far-reaching consequences for older people and their children, which could include increased feelings of loneliness and social isolation for parent and child alike.

HIGHER COPING SELF-EFFICACY ASSOCIATED WITH LOW SELF-PERCEIVED LONELINESS IN OLDER ADULTS WITH CHRONIC DISEASE

Melissa D. Hladek,¹ Paula V. Nersesian¹ Thomas K. Cudjoe² Jessica M. Gill³ and Sarah L. Szanton¹, *1. Johns Hopkins*