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This paper uses data from the biennial Swedish Longitudinal Occupational Survey of Health to examine changes in job quality among older workers, controlling for work intensity and employment characteristics. Job quality outcomes included job satisfaction and physical (dangerous, strenuous or unpleasant work) and psychosocial (job strain, effort-reward imbalance, work time control) working conditions. First difference estimation was used to analyze within-individual changes in job quality, as well as changes in hours, employment characteristics (shifting to a non-permanent contract, the private sector and self-employment) and health. Individuals who worked beyond pensionable age experienced statistically significant improvements in job quality, with larger improvements among those who reduced working hours and shifted from permanent to non-permanent contracts, from the public into the private sector, and from wage-and-salary to self-employment. We conclude that work beyond pensionable age is a distinctive period characterized by employment that becomes more flexible and rewarding and less stressful.

JOB QUALITY IN THE LATE CAREER IN SWEDEN, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED STATES

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This paper examines job satisfaction and psychosocial and physical job quality over the late career in three contrasting national settings: Sweden, Japan and the United States. The data come from an ex-post harmonized dataset of individuals aged 50 to 75 years constructed from the biennial Swedish Longitudinal Occupational Survey of Health (SLOSH, 2006–2018, n=13936 to 15520), Japanese Study of Ageing and Retirement (JSTAR, 2006–2013, n=3704) and the United States Health and Retirement Study (HRS, 2006–2016, n=6239 and 8002). The job quality outcomes were physical labour, psychosocial working conditions (time pressure, discretion, pay satisfaction, job security) and job satisfaction. Random effects modelling was performed with age modelled with spline functions in which two knots were placed at ages indicating eligibility for pensions claiming or mandatory retirement. Interestingly, in each country, post-pensionable-age jobs were generally less stressful, freer, and more satisfying than jobs held by younger workers.

Session 3620 (Symposium)

PRESIDENTIAL SYMPOSIUM: STORIES OF STRUGGLE AND RESILIENCE: EXPERT INTERDISCIPLINARY REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST YEAR

Chair: Danielle Waldron

Co-Chair: Kalisha Bonds Johnson

Are you an ESPO member curious about what the “new normal” means for your future career in the field of aging? Or are you a GSA member interested in hearing from your colleagues about their experiences over the past year? Welcome to the ESPO Presidential Symposium! During this session, speakers will share honest and candid insights about their careers in the field of aging amidst the pandemic, racial discrimination/social unrest, and economic insecurity. Speakers in the ESPO Presidential symposium include: Dr. Thomas K.M Cudjoe, Dr. Candace S. Brown, and Dr. Marnin J. Heisel. Dr. Cudjoe, a physician, will discuss his clinical experience treating older adults with COVID-19, the shift to tele-health, and his research on the impact of social isolation on older adults. Dr. Brown, an academician, will discuss how the new attention to the longstanding issues of social injustice in the U.S. shaped her teaching pedagogy, research, student mentorship, and provide critical context regarding the impact of COVID-19 on Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) professors. Dr. Heisel, a clinical psychologist, will share how his intervention research on resiliency and well-being in older adulthood shifted amidst the “new normal,” as well as how older adults in his clinical practice encountered and coped with difficulties over this past year. As our society confronts social injustice, tackles health implications of COVID-19, and adjusts to a new way of life, we must consider how these factors, together, inform the interdisciplinary stories of struggle and resilience in the field of aging.

A PANDEMIC PARADOX: INNOVATIONS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCY AND SUICIDE PREVENTION IN OLDER ADULTS

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial negative impact on the health and well-being of older adults, a demographic with the highest proportion of fatalities in North America. Long-term care and retirement homes have been especially hard hit. Sheltering in place can increase social isolation among older adults and contribute to feelings of stigmatization, burden, stress, anxiety, anger, and despair. As older adults also account for high rates of suicide, fear of infection, reduced access to professional and social supports, and growing apathy, hopelessness, and social isolation could amplify suicide risk (see Zortea et al., 2020). The speaker will discuss how his program of research on psychological resiliency and suicide prevention in older adults has pivoted online over the past year, and how the pandemic has paradoxically inspired innovative approaches to research, education, clinical practice, and social advocacy for older adults that will likely continue well beyond the present time.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES AMID DISRUPTIVE TIMES

Thomas Cudjoe, *Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland, United States*

Today many older adults are experiencing intensified social isolation and loneliness as they attempt to “stay safe at home.” The notion, is a stark contrast from our understanding of the importance of social connections on health and well-being. This session highlights: first hand experiences