

The Open University's repository of research publications  
and other research outputs

## Wealth and health in predicting elders' social capabilities in China: mediating role of social network

### Journal Item

#### How to cite:

Zhang, Yalu; Gao, Qin; Zhai, Fuhua and Anand, Paul (2019). Wealth and health in predicting elders' social capabilities in China: mediating role of social network. *Innovation in Aging*, 3(S1) S369-S369.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2019 The Authors



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1093/geroni/igz038.1348>

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's [data policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

and supports, participation in activities, feelings of being valued by others, barriers to supports and services, and the overall isolation experienced by older adults. The responses from 1,719 urban and rural older adults indicate that 24.1% of respondents felt that they lack support, 17.2% feel less connected to family and friends, and 16.8% of respondents do not feel valued by their friends and family. Overall, almost one-quarter (23.9%) of the survey respondents score 'high' or 'medium' on a Social Isolation Index. One-third of respondents report they experience barriers to participation in activities outside the home. Several key categories of barriers were identified: health, personal, environmental, social, transportation and systemic. Respondents identified accommodation, services, practices, and activities as areas where their community could assist in participation of community activities outside of the home. Social isolation can have serious health consequences for older adults. The results of this survey highlight several key areas that older adults identify as important for reducing their feelings of isolation and enhancing their overall health and well-being.

#### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PEER-BASED INTERVENTION ON SOCIALLY ISOLATED OLDER CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

Daniel, W. L. Lai,<sup>1</sup> Jia Li,<sup>1</sup> Liza Chan,<sup>2</sup> Celia Li,<sup>3</sup> and Alison X. Ou<sup>1</sup>, 1. *The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*, 2. *Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association, Calgary, Canada*, 3. *Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association, Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

**Objectives:** This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of a peer-based intervention in reducing older Chinese immigrants' loneliness and social isolation to improve their psychosocial well-being. **Method:** A randomized controlled trial design was adopted. A sample of 60 community-dwelling older Chinese immigrants aged 65 and above were randomly assigned to the intervention group (n=30) and the control group (n=30). Intervention group participants received an eight-week peer support intervention. 25 volunteers aged 48 to 76 were recruited and trained to provide one-to-one peer support services through home visits and telephone. The services included multiple activities such as providing emotional support, assisting in problem-solving, and community resources sharing. Different types of activities were consecutively executed throughout the eight weeks in accordance with the service protocol. Standardized assessments including loneliness, social support, social participation, and other psychosocial outcomes such as life satisfaction, happiness, depression, and resilience at baseline and after intervention were measured. **Results:** After the intervention, as compared to control group participants, intervention group participants reported a significant decrease in loneliness, fewer barriers in social participation, and a significant increase in resilience. They also reported fewer depressive symptoms, increased life satisfaction, and happiness, but no such improvements were observed in the control group. **Discussion:** The study findings illustrate the need to further examine the use of peer-based interventions for both program effectiveness and delivery efficiency. In the era of population aging, baby boomers can be trained to take up more volunteer roles to serve older adults in distress via peer-based intervention approaches.

GSA 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting

#### WEALTH AND HEALTH IN PREDICTING ELDERERS' SOCIAL CAPABILITIES IN CHINA: MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORK

Yalu Zhang,<sup>1</sup> Qin Gao,<sup>1</sup> Fuhua Zhai,<sup>2</sup> and Paul Anand<sup>3</sup>, 1. *Columbia University, New York, New York, United States*, 2. *Fordham University, New York, New York, United States*, 3. *The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom*

Despite an established positive link between social wealth, health, and social capability among older adults, the effect and mechanisms among these factors are understudied. This paper uses the WHO Study on Global Ageing and Adult Health (SAGE) data and a mediation analysis method, combining social capital theory and a social capabilities approach, to provide new evidence on the effects of financial resource, physical function, and cognitive function on the social capabilities of older adults (aged 55 and above) in China and the possible mediating role of social network in this relationship. The descriptive analysis results show that urban older adults (n=5,274), on average, had lower freedom of expression, lower sense of living safety, and less frequent community participation, while having better self-perceived health, higher physical and cognitive functions, more household income, and higher educational background than their rural peers (n=5,270). The Baron and Kenny's mediation analysis results show that social networks accounted for a substantial proportion of the effects of wealth and health on social capabilities, but wealth and health still had strong, positive direct effects of its own. Higher mediating effects of social networks were found in the association between functions and social capabilities of freedom of expression (9.46%) and sense of safety (36.33%) among rural older adults. Results of this study urge for further social policies and intervention programs to enhance older adults' social capabilities, including social cohesion, sense of trust and safety, physical and mental functioning, and subjective well-being.

#### SESSION 1520 (SYMPOSIUM)

##### TARGETING THE MTOR NETWORK TO MAXIMIZE HEALTHSPAN

Chair: Viviana I. Perez, *Linus Pauling Institute, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, United States*

The mechanistic target of rapamycin (mTOR) is a key nutrient and growth factor-responsive pathway that has emerged as a central regulator of aging. Inhibition of mTOR complex I in particular has been found to increase lifespan and improve functional declines during aging in yeast, worms, flies, and mice. Recently clinical studies have provided the first evidence that similar effects may be achievable in pet dogs and in elderly people. This session will focus on new discoveries related to mTOR signaling and aging.

##### MECHANISMS OF NEUROPROTECTION BY MTOR INHIBITORS

Veronica Galvan<sup>1</sup>, 1. *Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies, San Antonio, Texas, United States*

The mammalian/mechanistic target-of-rapamycin (mTOR) inhibitor rapamycin, that delays aging in mice, halts and even reverses memory deficits, and restores cerebral blood flow (CBF), neuronal activation, and neurovascular coupling in