environment-cognition relationship. Future work should identify other environmental influences on sleep and cognition in aging to inform public health intervention priorities.

MARITAL QUALITY AS A MODERATOR OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

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Research suggests that marital quality may buffer the impact of sensory impairments in later life, and that marital quality relates to cognitive functioning. This study explored how marital quality moderated links between sensory impairments and cognitive functioning. We used data from 723 paired marital dyads from two cohorts in the NHATS and NSOC studies across three-year periods (n=340 dyads from waves 1, 2, 3; n=383 dyads from waves 5, 6, 7). Growth curve models of executive functioning indicated that marital quality moderated effects of both hearing and vision impairment on changes in cognitive functioning longitudinally. Specifically, higher marital quality was associated with higher executive functioning across time. Results suggested no improvement in executive functioning among those with average or lower marital quality. Although cognition declines with advanced age and with sensory impairments, results suggest that older adults with higher marital quality may improve in some aspects of cognition longitudinally.

Session 3470 (Paper)

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

A NEW AND WORRISOME PREDICTOR OF ATTITUDES TOWARD SUICIDE: SELF-RATED HEALTH

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Do people have the right to end their own lives? The General Social Survey has monitored the attitudes of Americans towards suicide since 1977 using four questions: Do you think a person has the right to end his or her own life? These four responses can be combined into a reliable index representing an individual’s attitude toward suicide. As average population education levels have increased and religiosity has fallen, attitudes favoring the right to suicide have increased across the population. This research project introduces a previously understudied predictor of attitudes toward suicide: self-rated health. Using logistic and ordinal logistic regression, and controlling for age, education level, religiosity, marital status, survey year, race, and sex, I find that, over time, self-rated health has become a significant predictor of attitudes toward suicide. Since 2002, respondents who perceived themselves to be in poor health are significantly more likely to favor the right to end one’s life, especially if the individual has an incurable disease. After stratifying by age and race, I find that the relationship between self-rated health and attitudes toward suicide is strongest among individuals in the mid-life and is equally significant as a predictor for White and Black Americans after 2010. These findings provide further evidence that mental health screening is an increasingly vital component of physician/patient interactions and highlight the importance of continuity of care.

COVID-19 OUTBREAKS AND CONTROL MEASURES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH DEPRESSION RISK AMONG OLDER ADULTS

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Local COVID-19 outbreaks and infection control measures may affect mental health in older persons. This study aims to investigate the effects of COVID-19 outbreaks and control measures on depression risk in community-dwelling older adults in Hong Kong. With rolling cross-sectional design, telephone screenings for depressive risk were conducted among 8163 older people using Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) from February to September 2020. COVID-19 outbreaks across thirty weeks were measured using real-time effective reproductive number (Rt), infected new cases, and change of infected new cases by week. Infection control measures were assessed using four policy indices, including government response, government stringency, containment and health, and economic support. Linear regressions were used to test the associations of depression risk with COVID-19 outbreaks and control measures. We found that being female and higher Rt were associated with higher depression risk in the overall sample. In older adults without pre-existing mental health issues, higher depression risk were related to older age (t=1.974, 95%CI[-0.006, 0.000], p<0.05), higher government stringency (t=2.954, 95%CI[0.007, 0.033], p<0.01), and less stringent containment and health-related policy (t=2.599, 95%CI[0.041, -0.006], p=0.01). In older adults with pre-existing mental health issues, greater changes in newly infected cases were related to higher depression risk (t=2.813, 95%CI[0.002, 0.010], p<0.01). In conclusion, the effects of COVID-19 infection risk and control measures on depression risk differ among older Chinese by pre-existing mental health issues. Future public health communication could build on resilience to balance awareness of infection risks and mental health risks in older persons.

EXPLAINING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG CAREGIVERS OF OLDER PATIENTS WITH CRITICAL ILLNESS

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The aging of baby boomers makes caring for the elderly an increasingly important topic. As rising cost of health care, the care for seriously ill patients has gradually shifted from hospitals to families, particularly in the countryside. Along with growing demand for informal care, informal caregivers are...
at increased risk of depression. The aim of this study was to explore the potential protective factors or risk factors associated with depressive symptoms of caregivers for patients with critical illness (45 to 93 years of age) across gender groups, explain their different pathways of influence, and elucidate targeted measures to improve their outcomes (N=518). Results from the statistical model showed that the paths of effect from care needs to caregiver depressive symptoms differed between male and female informal caregivers. Care needs were not significantly associated with depression symptoms among informal caregivers, for either men or women. Care hours of more than 12 hours per day and financial difficulties at home are risk factors for depressive symptoms in caregivers, with significance of OR=3.42; 95%CI,1.97 to 5.94; P=0.000 and OR=2.98; 95%CI, 1.46 to 6.05; p=0.003, respectively. For male caregivers, years of caregiver education and the feel relied upon by relative’s were both protective factors, whereas Job-Caregiving conflict, was a risk factor (P<0.05). For female caregivers, caregiver burden and higher caregiver age were its risk factors (P<0.05). These important findings demonstrate that to be effective in reducing depressive symptoms among informal caregivers, both counterinterventions and triage interventions by gender are warranted.

Session 3475 (Symposium)

THE EXPERIENCE OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Chair: Tiffany Washington Co-Chair: Terri Lewinson Discussant: Jennifer Craft Morgan
Older adults are at increased risk for COVID-19 illness, hospitalization, and mortality. Essential health care workers became the backbone of their care during the pandemic, and their experiences are worthy of discussion. This symposium will highlight the emotional impact of COVID-19 on health care workers, and their scope of practice in various health settings. Using data from a cross-sectional survey, presenter one will describe concerns and coping strategies among nursing home social workers during COVID-19. Next, presenter two will present findings on the emotional health and wellbeing of home care workers. Then, presenter three will describe the experience of the VA’s strike teams sent into 82 Florida nursing homes most impacted by COVID. Presenter four will describe findings from a qualitative study on emotional distress experienced by hospital-based medical directors, nurse practitioners, and other health care workers. Finally, presenter five will describe findings from a qualitative study on emotional distress experienced by hospital-based medical directors, nurse practitioners, and other health care workers. Social workers are essential to the delivery of health care with older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper focuses on the impact of policies in health care systems that affect geriatric social work practice. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 55 social workers from a variety of health care settings. Data were analyzed to identify the scope of social work practice in health care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how policies in their respective settings impacted their work. Conditions that impeded participants’ ability to provide quality care and work within their scope of practice included inconsistent expectations of interdisciplinary team members, disparate access to resources, restriction of opportunities to address emotional distress experienced by workers. Recommendations for policy enhancements in health care settings include interprofessional education on effective team communication, protocol development for the equitable distribution of resources among essential workers, and trauma-informed in-service trainings for health care administrators.

WORK DOES NOT END WHEN YOU LEAVE: CONCERNS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG NURSING HOME SOCIAL WORKERS DURING COVID-19
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Nursing home social workers (NH SW) at the frontline during COVID-19 are faced with many challenges in meeting the psychosocial needs of residents while balancing their own well-being needs. In order to explore the experiences of NH SW during COVID-19, the study utilized a cross-sectional survey distributed to social media sites (e.g., Reddit, Facebook) and professional networks. The survey asked participants (N = 63) open-ended questions which were analyzed using the rigorous and accelerated data reduction (RAaR) method. Themes suggested that fear for self, lack of administrative support, and overall stress were notable concerns among NH SW. Findings also suggested that support from family/friends and self-care were most personally helpful to NH SW. Lastly, themes related to coping strategies included talking with co-workers, mindfulness, and boundary setting. Findings suggest the need for increased supports for NH SW. Implications related to stress and coping during COVID-19 are offered.

GET IN AND GET OUT: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF HOME CARE WORKERS
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This research explores the emotional health of home care workers (HCWs) during the coronavirus pandemic. In-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted with 17 home care workers in the fall of 2020. Thematic analysis revealed important connections between emotional health and success on the job. Perception of time and appreciation emerged as key elements that impacted emotional health. HCWs expressed the pressure to perform as usual while simultaneously