MARITAL STRAIN AND SUPPORT AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN LATER LIFE: ASCRIBING A ROLE TO EARLY-LIFE CONDITIONS

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Decades of research have the beneficial effects of marital support and the detrimental consequences of marital strain on health and well-being. However, we know relatively less about how circumstances in childhood—a key developmental period of the life course—influence the relational structure in which later life is embedded and any implications this may hold for well-being. We integrate the life course perspective with the stress process model to offer a framework for how childhood conditions (childhood happiness, family structure, and financial strain) moderate the relationship between marital support/strain and subjective well-being in older adulthood in potentially different ways for men and women. The consequences of marital strain may be more severe and the benefits of marital support may not be as strongly felt for those adults who experienced greater adversity during childhood. Drawing on longitudinal data from Waves 2 (2010-2011) and 3 (2015-2016) of the NSHA P project (N = 1,376), results from lagged dependent variable models suggest that marital support buffers the effect of not living with both parents in childhood on subjective well-being for men. Meanwhile, women raised in families that experienced financial hardship reported lower subjective well-being in the context of marital strain in later life. No significant interaction effects were obtained for childhood happiness. Taken together, our findings suggest that adverse experiences in childhood can be scarring, particularly in the context of strained intimate relationships. However, a supportive marriage can, in some cases, offset the effects of childhood hardship on subjective well-being in later life.

VALIDATION STUDY OF THE SPANISH VERSION OF THE MARITAL SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OLDER PERSONS

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Interpersonal relationship quality is relevant for older adults’ well-being and mental health. Studies focused on methods to evaluate marital satisfaction in older adults and the relationship of this variable with psychological correlates are scarce. This study examined the psychometric properties of the Spanish version (Castro-Díaz et al., 2012) of the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire For Older Persons (MSQFOP; Haynes et al., 1992) in a sample of middle-aged and older adults from Spain. Participants were 130 individuals (60.8% women) 40 years or older (M = 60.31, SD = 11) involved in a marital/partner relationship. The assessed variables were marital satisfaction (MSQFOP), marital warmth, positive emotions, frequency of arguments, perceived stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and anxiety and depressive symptoms. The results from the exploratory factor analysis yielded a three factor structure (compatibility, communication, and sex) explaining 77.8% of the variance. Even though the factor structure was the same as that of the original version, some items loaded on other factors. The internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) was 0.97. The results revealed significant (p < .001) positive associations between marital satisfaction, marital warmth, and positive emotions. In addition, significant negative associations were found between marital satisfaction and frequency of arguments, stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and anxious and depressive symptomatology (p < .05). The findings suggest that Spanish version MSQFOP has good psychometric properties that recommend its use with middle-aged and older adults. Marital satisfaction seems to be a relevant construct for understanding stress, well-being, and mental health in middle-aged and older adults.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 IN LONG-TERM CARE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Chair: Karin Wolf-Osterrmann Discussant: Marie Boltz

The outbreak of COVID-19 is a major challenge for health care systems all over the world. Older residents of long-term care facilities (LTCF) such as nursing homes (NH) are among those at highest risk for COVID-19 and comprise a population with dramatically higher rates of morbidity and mortality than the general community. NH staff are also affected by the pandemic as they are challenged by increased workloads, emotional burden caused by the loss of resident life, and the fear of becoming infecting themselves or infecting family members. Finally, the pandemic places emotional and practical demands upon informal carers who are involved in the life of the NH resident. Therefore, research should investigate different perspectives on LTCF during the pandemic and discuss major challenges and possible support structures and strategies. Such an understanding is necessary to optimize care, support post-pandemic recovery, and prepare for future public health challenges. This international symposium will therefore provide four presentations to address these issues. The first presentation will report on global mortality data associated with COVID-19 in LTCF. The second presentation reports on the situation in German NHs addressing the complex situation of morbidity, care dependency, and social isolation. The third presentation will describe the effects of the pandemic upon NH staff in Poland. The final presentation examines the impact and guidelines of allowing visitors in NHs in the Netherlands for residents, family caregivers and staff. Our discussant, Marie Boltz, will synthesize the research findings and lead a discussion of future directions for policy and practice.

COVID-19 IN GERMAN NURSING HOMES: A PANEL STUDY ON MORBIDITY, BURDEN OF CARE, AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

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