HOW BIOMARKER-BASED DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT AFFECT ALZHEIMER’S STIGMA: RESULTS OF A RANDOMIZED TRIAL

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Alzheimer’s disease (AD) causes progressive disability and, ultimately, death. Currently no therapy can delay or slow cognitive and functional decline. This prognosis contributes to the general public’s negative reactions—discrimination, pity, and social distance—toward individuals with AD and their families. But what if, using AD biomarker tests, diagnosis was made earlier and treatment was available? Stigma of AD might change. This project aimed to discover how diagnosis and treatment of AD before the onset of cognitive impairment would change public stigma, and how these effects might differ in ethnoracial populations. Comparisons of 12 experimental conditions (i.e., 2 (biomarker test result) x 2 (treatment availability) x 3 (cognitive impairment: none, mild, moderate)) are conducted in two independent samples of self-identified White (N=800) and Black (N=800) Americans. Findings anticipate the translation of the preclinical AD construct into care and will inform public policies and interventions to mitigate public stigma of AD.

Session 2415 (Symposium)

GENDER, FAMILY HISTORIES, AND LATE-LIFE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Chair: Deborah Carr Co-Chair: Pamela Smock
Discussant: Teresa Ghilarducci
Text TK.

MARITAL HISTORIES AND LATE-LIFE ECONOMIC SECURITY: DO SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS RULES PERPETUATE DISPARITIES?

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Disparities in late-life economic security persist along the lines of gender, marital status, race, and educational attainment. We propose that these disparities are partly due to the fact that Social Security benefits are structured such that never-married, divorced, and cohabiting persons, those who were widowed prematurely, or were in a dual-earner couple face benefit penalties. Drawing on data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS), a study that followed men and women from age 18 (in 1957) through age 72 (in 2011), we examine disparities in Social Security earnings and poverty risk on the basis of gender and marital histories. Our results reveal a large disadvantage for divorced and never-married persons (relative to their married counterparts), with women and those divorced two or more times experiencing the largest toll. We discuss the implications of our results for revamping Social Security to better meet the needs of 21st century families.

HOW MARITAL STATUS SHAPES GRANDPARENTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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How does marital status shape grandparent care work when grandchildren have disabilities? Based on 50 in-depth interviews with grandparents who provide various types of care for grandchildren with disabilities, we find that marital status shapes care work in three distinct ways: (1) Many who are married describe both grandparents working as a team to provide vital care; (2) Some who are married describe spouses, primarily grandfathers, who are either unable or unwilling to provide care; and (3) Many who are not married, primarily grandmothers, describe providing relatively high levels of care and support despite relatively low resources. While nearly all report a great deal of joy and satisfaction with their care work, those who are single, have greater care responsibilities, and fewer resources are more likely to report adverse social, emotional, physical, and financial impacts. More robust social policies could alleviate the impact of marital status on grandparent care work.

THE EFFECTS OF GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS ON ACCRUED DEBT IN RETIREMENT PLANNING

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The effects of gender and marital status on accrued debt in retirement planning becomes an urgent concern because unmarried women face greater financial challenges in retirement than their counterparts. This study used data from the National Financial Capability Study (NFCS), designed by FINRA. We identified debt that influences retirement planning among a sample of pre-retirees, aged 51 to 61 years, and consider the associations of gender, marital status, debt, and retirement planning. Our results indicated that mortgage debt and credit card debt were negatively associated with retirement planning for women. Having a retirement account is positively associated with retirement planning and it also mediates the relationship between credit card debt and retirement planning. We urge women and financial planning executives to take time during the pre-retirement years to assess their various forms of debt and determine how it affects retirement planning objectives given current marital status.

Session 2420 (Symposium)

JOSEPH T. FREEMAN AND EXCELLENCE IN REHABILITATION AWARD LECTURE

Chair: Elsa Strotmeyer

The Joseph T. Freeman Award lecture will feature an address by the 2021 Freeman Award recipient Pamela Accichione, PhD, CRNP, BC, FGSA, FAAN, of the University of Pennsylvania. The Joseph T. Freeman Award is a lecture-ship in geriatrics awarded to a prominent physician in the field of aging, both in research and practice. The award was established in 1977 through a bequest from a patient’s estate as a tribute to Dr. Joseph T. Freeman. The Excellence in Rehabilitation of Aging Persons Award lecture will feature an address by the 2021 Excellence in Rehabilitation Award recipient Gregory Hicks, MPT, PhD of the University of Delaware. The Excellence in Rehabilitation of Aging Persons Award is designed to acknowledge outstanding contributions in the field of the rehabilitation of aging individuals.