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PROMOTING INTERGENERATIONAL EXCHANGES WITHIN RURAL AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES: A CBPR APPROACH

Victoria Pumilio, and Bernard Steinman, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, United States
A Dyadic Assessment of Cognitive Resources and Aging and Cognition Among Older Korean American Couples in Multiple Locations

The purpose of this study was to examine the cognitive function and well-being of older married couples. We specifically focused on the role of cognitive resources (education, acculturation, friend network, and activity participation) of their own and of their spouse. In a subset of 252 couples of the U.S. Data were drawn from a survey with older Korean Americans aged 60 and older, collected during 2017−2018 focusing on community-dwelling older Korean American couples in Austin, Texas, United States and Seoul, Republic of Korea.

We examined the extent to which cognitive resources were associated with cognitive function, considering the lack of couple research on this topic. Using a subset of 252 couples of the survey (individual N = 504), we examined the extent to which education, acculturation, friend network, and activity participation were significantly associated with cognitive function especially among older immigrant population, the significant other in their lives in that spousal relationships are particularly important. In dyadic studies among older adults, findings that spousal relationships are particularly important in creating an inclusive society as one that actively encourages older adults to participate in their community’s social, civic, and economic life. Research often prioritizes addressing the physical challenges many older adults face, frequently overlooking societal engagement aspects that promote active aging and inclusion. This research outlines how a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach was used to uncover and address the societal stigmas and counterproductive attitudes experienced by older adults in a rural age-friendly designated community. Our CBPR approach is characterized as a process encountered in three stages: (i) conducting a multigenerational survey on age-friendliness, (ii) engaging community members in planning intergenerational opportunities, and (iii) implementing intergenerational engagement activities identified in earlier stages. By participating in methodologies from both CBPR and grounded theory approaches, older adults acquired agency and voice in the research process, thus directly impacting age-friendly outcomes in their communities. Our findings detail the importance of utilizing a CBPR approach when researching core AFC fundamentals that are instrumental in creating inclusive policies and promoting healthful, mutually beneficial intergenerational opportunities.