

"Loneliness in Older Adults"
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King's College London, United Kingdom
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Note: Text includes some additional transcript in square brackets from video livestream

[2024/05/17 10:29] Elektra Panthar: Hello everyone.
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The transcriptionists are:
Elektra Panthar
Shaerken Changeheart
The speakers will be identified by initials as they speak.
The following initials in the transcription record will identify the speakers:
TH: Tiago Horta Reis Da Silva

[2024/05/17 10:30] Gentle Heron: Hello. My name is Sandar Gausman.
I've been in SL for 17 years. I have fairly severe Multiple Sclerosis, so by now I can't walk or dance or drive in RL. SL has become my main social world. I host dances and go to interesting events.
Today we have the pleasure of having Tiago da Silva. Mr. Horta Reis da Silva is a Lecturer in Nursing Education at King's University, assisting with the BSc programme and teaching other modules. Tiago teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses nationally and internationally.
He is a Senior Fellow in Higher Education, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, and a Fellow for Faculty Nursing and Midwifery Royal College of Surgeons Ireland.
It is Tiago da Silva's time to speak, so please mute your microphones. Thank you

[2024/05/17 10:31] Elektra Panthar: TH: Thank you for introduction!
I'd like to have a discussion as a group
Welcome, I'm Tiago and I'll be talking about some of the components of loneliness and interventions for older adults and the effects on the overall health
SL is a great tool

Loneliness is subjective

It's a distressing experience and it's perceived as isolation

You can have a multitude of individuals that can be very lonely

[2024/05/17 10:34] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): actually I am his target audience. I'm old and disabled

[2024/05/17 10:35] Elektra Panthar: TH: you could be in a full office but still feel lonely - disconnected

Loneliness is a risk factor for suicide ideation as well

It's like smoking 15 cigarettes! I was shocked to see this

Individuals over 50 are more likely to feel loneliness, especially if widows, if they have health issues, if they live alone, if they are from a different background than the community they're in

One in 10 individuals only speak to friends once a month - that's a long time. It can be verbal but also messages, or SL and similar environments

Why do you think it's important to discuss loneliness?

[2024/05/17 10:39] Sofia Varela: because it's not easy to talk about

[2024/05/17 10:39] Elektra Panthar: A: Because so many people are lonely

[2024/05/17 10:39] Shiloh e. (Shiloh Emmons): because we have an aging population

[2024/05/17 10:39] Gentle Heron: Because it can be eliminated

[2024/05/17 10:39] Wisdomseeker (Lissena Resident): Loneliness affects our bodies as well as our minds

[2024/05/17 10:39] Buffy Beale: good one Gentle

[2024/05/17 10:39] Paws Pawzouti (Opinicus Extraordinaire): 53 years and checking every box you're talking about.. D:

[2024/05/17 10:40] Mook Wheeler: Loneliness in a crowded world is horrifying.

[2024/05/17 10:40] Widget Whiteberry: Talking about where we do or do not feel connection can raise awareness and suggest possibilities.

[2024/05/17 10:40] Faith Frances (Roxie Marten): Try dating after 60, almost impossible

[2024/05/17 10:39] Elektra Panthar: TH: yes, loneliness increased a lot also during the pandemic

reading chat

I agree, it's taboo sometimes - how can you be lonely with so many people around, and the technology?

The social expectations are changing

I grew up with my grandparents and they taught me a lot while my parents worked - they spoiled me rotten!

Grandparents were the feedback of what they saw - they saw what the parents were doing and compensated

It's important to see that in the past grandparents had a big role

We have an aging population - lots of individuals will go to nursing home, kids will go to daycare

[2024/05/17 10:41] Widget Whiteberry: Taking care of grandkids provides lots of physical contact, which feels great.

[2024/05/17 10:41] Rhiannon Chatnoir: yes, that concept of an extended family that lived near enough to keep connecting

[2024/05/17 10:41] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): I'm his target audience. Alone, disabled and pretty much alone. But I have my niece living here

[2024/05/17 10:41] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): I have fond memories of my times with my grandparents

[2024/05/17 10:42] Elektra Panthar: TH: loneliness creates stress - it releases hormones that affect health negatively

A way to prevent dementia is talking with people

Interaction stimulates the brain

High stress impacts a lot

[2024/05/17 10:44] Elektra Panthar: TH bodies are used to high levels of stress - once one relaxes, the immune system is already debilitated

That's why we have higher cases of cancer

Loneliness disturbs sleep as well, which affects negatively the body and the mind as well

[2024/05/17 10:42] Rhiannon Chatnoir: yes, loneliness can impact people cognitively

[2024/05/17 10:43] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): MS can cause depression

[2024/05/17 10:46] Elektra Panthar: TH: some could find solace in food or alcohol, but only temporarily

Then comes the shame, or disgust

Risk of dying prematurely for this, or for metabolic conditions

Healthcare professionals could be in a good position to help

Patients could trust me as a nurse during their last moment

With COVID I had so many people in their last moments and they called me so many names of their relatives

They just want not to die alone

[2024/05/17 10:48] Rhiannon Chatnoir: it is just as important to make the last time with someone as it is in our beginnings/birth

[2024/05/17 10:49] Elektra Panthar: TH: Loneliness is caused by being without a set of relationships

The pandemic affected us so much with the isolation and the many rules

It affected our self esteem and our health

We need to 'feel' people, talk, have some type of interactions

The lack of belonging

Discrepancy between a person desire and what they have

Of course this is very specific to the individual

It's interesting about the remote work - some people missed being there, the connection, but some preferred the remote option

[2024/05/17 10:51] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): I liked working remotely.

I'm retired now but working was an excellent thing to keep me connected even if it was virtual

[2024/05/17 10:51] Elektra Panthar: TH: Theoretical approach was Wise 1973

Sullivan psychodynamic approach

Wise described emotional loneliness and social loneliness

For example refugees feel social loneliness because of the lack of social connection

[2024/05/17 10:53] Faust (HAPPYLIFE Harmony): It seems like loneliness is a signal like hunger. Hunger > eat. Loneliness > connect.

[2024/05/17 10:54] Elektra Panthar: TH: emotional loneliness is like having a nonresponsive partner

Emotional intelligence - women will have more, and expect the partner to be more attentive and reciprocate

Men are wired differently and lack understanding of this need

Pros and cons

[2024/05/17 10:56] Faith Frances (Roxie Marten): Explains why many women late in life become lesbians

[2024/05/17 10:56] Elektra Panthar: TH: emotional loneliness - for ex. a widow

When a partner dies, the other one passes after 6 months - a year

Usually women survive longer than men

I hope we'll be statistics that include other gender presentations and orientations in the future

For social loneliness, unemployment is also an example

Groups and communities are important to prevent loneliness

[2024/05/17 10:58] Roxksie Logan: it might also be to do with females tends to have more friends than guys as they age, from what I can see for a layman's perspective of looking at my elderly parents, my mother is always at groups, her husband is one or twice a week.

[2024/05/17 10:59] Elektra Panthar: TH: agreed Roxksie

Structurally female have more connections than male brains because of the hormones even if it's slightly lighter, you have more capacity for multitasking, better social skills

[2024/05/17 10:59] Shiloh e. (Shiloh Emmons): Q: How did you find people with pets making it thru the pandemic? I would imagine older people with pets are less lonely, is this what you found in your research?

[2024/05/17 11:00] Elektra Panthar: TH: yes pets! research has been done on this - petting releases stress, and the interaction with the pets help

My mom interacts with chickens and other animals, it helps her

[2024/05/17 11:01] Roxksie Logan: my cat talks more than I do. but it encourages me to remember my daily routine.

[2024/05/17 11:01] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): Having a companion pet = someone to care for

[2024/05/17 11:01] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): My cat is my salvation She is very intelligent

[2024/05/17 11:02] Faith Frances (Roxie Marten): I never understood the whole cat thing until I got older and living alone. Now I love my cat as much as I love my children

[2024/05/17 11:02] Widget Whiteberry: Degree and type of contact with grandchildren? Other young people?

[2024/05/17 11:01] Elektra Panthar: TH: a pet is a good alternative

My mom will kill me if she knows !

Having pets makes you think, makes you mobile

Psychodynamic approach : the trauma will trigger loneliness in older age

Existential approach: loneliness is an existential condition

Anxiety loneliness : being anxious about being alone

Cognitive approach, one of the most accepted: how you perceive loneliness

Evaluation of one's social relationships against standards

Nearly 21% people in UK feel lonely

Also in nursing homes - it shows you the perspective that you can be surrounded by people but still lonely

Risk factors: gender, low socioeconomic status, poor physical health

[2024/05/17 11:06] Faust (HAPPYLIFE Harmony): Recently diagnosed with ADHD and I have been slowly reviewing sore points from my past in light of this new information. I am guessing there may be unique ways that other various forms of neurodiversity impact loneliness. For ADHD I found this: <https://adhdonline.com/articles/the-connection-between-adhd-and-loneliness/>

[2024/05/17 11:07] Elektra Panthar: TH: it cuts on ways and reasons to have interactions with others

Risk factors are also little contact with family and friends, living in remote areas, living arrangements or marital status

They noticed men who are married lived longer than bachelors - the wives were looking after them

Ethnicity and language is also a risk factor - it's a barrier

[2024/05/17 11:10] Stealth (Cicero Kit): It can be difficult to find your community

[2024/05/17 11:10] Elektra Panthar: TH: Sexual orientation and presentation is a risk factor too - being neurodiverse or disabled also unfortunately impacts loneliness

Loneliness affects health negatively - it leads to depression, cognitive ability - because they don't have chances to use those abilities

Each new language you learn gives you more years free of cognitive problems

[2024/05/17 11:12] Rhiannon Chatnoir: I have heard that too for people who play instruments that learning music also has similar impact as learning another language

[2024/05/17 11:12] Elektra Panthar: TH: physically loneliness will bring to early death

We have several ways to assess loneliness

Measuring loneliness

To measure loneliness, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) loneliness scale is used (Russell, 1996). This 20-item scale, shown in appendix one, measures loneliness and SI by incorporating a four-point rating scale, ranging from 'never' to 'always' when answering questions. The scale is reliable and valid, but criticised for its length and complexity, therefore a 3-item UCLA loneliness scale was developed, shown in appendix two (Hughes, Waite, Hawkey, & Cacioppo, 2004). There is no standard score that considers an individual as lonely, instead it is advised scores are based individually and whether it changes over time (Office for National Statistics, 2018b). The scale is appropriate for those aged 16 and above, being government recommended as it is quick, easy and already used worldwide (Office for National Statistics, 2018b; Campaign to end loneliness, 2015).

The 3-item scale is advantageous as it is versatile, for example self-completed, someone asking the

questions or over the telephone (Campaign to end loneliness, 2015; Hughes et al., 2004).

However, this scale uses only negative wording, unlike the 20-item scale which includes positive questioning. Negative wording can cause respondent bias and healthcare professional's can experience difficulties approaching sensitive topics when it solely involves negatively worded questions, creating a limitation (Campaign to end loneliness, 2015).

The impact in the district nursing role is it could use the 3-item UCLA loneliness scale for a quick and effective assess of loneliness.

Protocol: Lead-in and questions are read to respondent.

The next questions are about how you feel about different aspects of your life. For each one, tell me how often you feel that way.

1. First, how often do you feel that you lack companionship: Hardly ever, some of the time, or often?

1 Hardly Ever

2 Some of the Time

3 Often

2. How often do you feel left out: Hardly ever, some of the time, or often?

1

[2024/05/17 11:14] Elektra Panthar: Hardly Ever

2 Some of the Time

3 Often

3. How often do you feel isolated from others? (Is it hardly ever, some of the time, or often?)

1 Hardly Ever

2 Some of the Time

3 Often

Scoring: Sum the total of all items. Higher scores indicate greater degrees of loneliness.

I like the tests that use more positive words

The UCLA is widely used, it's comparable, but it has some false negatives and positive

It's a very quick score, but focuses on the negatives

The campaign to end loneliness is more positive

The De Jeong Gierveld is more academic

There are both positive and negative wordings

I encourage you to try these scales

Single item can be very specific, direct

[2024/05/17 11:17] Rhiannon Chatnoir: links and info for some of this is on the 'campaign to end loneliness' site including a pdf with the questions:

<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/evaluation/>

[2024/05/17 11:18] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): are these scales in the information we got?

[2024/05/17 11:19] Gentle Heron: Yes in the handout in the box on stage

[2024/05/17 11:20] Elektra Panthar: TH: prevention and interventions, I would like to promote independence, and interactions (TV sucks out your soul! SL is better because you can interact)

Interventions: one on one is always good - community engagement is good - groups are good because they can be a safe space

I volunteer for some organizations and I like to do befriending for older adults via phone, especially during Christmas

I was just doing small talk for an hour, but I hope they would make them feel less lonely

Group befriending exists too

Also helping them with shopping, picking medicine - it can be volunteer based or professionally hired

[2024/05/17 11:23] Faith Frances (Roxie Marten): What about love for the older person? Any data on that ?

[2024/05/17 11:24] Elektra Panthar: TH: younger adults can feel very vulnerable and they did well in these roles, older adults felt very useful in teaching and inspiring

Wayfinder and community navigators are liaisons

Groups of social support

Group services for different needs

Wider community engagement like hobbies, interests based communities

[2024/05/17 11:25] Sandar Rose Gausman (Sandar Gausman): Meal on wheels is in Massachusetts but I don't know nationally

[2024/05/17 11:25] Stepin (Stepinwolf Darkstone): One of the goals of the Apartments on Cape Heron was to have a high enough population that if you log in to your apartment, there would be someone else in the community to interact with. The Cape Heron sim is owned by Virtual Ability.

[2024/05/17 11:27] Stealth (Cicero Kit): It seems to me that a potential solution to the loneliness older people face (and the housing problem experienced by many young people) would be through co-housing; younger people living with seniors... not just between people needing caregivers and those needing employment, but that too. Many younger people feel isolated as well. There are a lot of benefits to intergenerational friendships. It can be difficult to find your community, but sometimes it helps to look for connection in unexpected places.

[2024/05/17 11:25] Elektra Panthar: TH: of course nowadays technology based intervention is spread - hello SL!

[2024/05/17 11:25] Rhiannon Chatnoir: yes, Second Life [goes] way back

[2024/05/17 11:26] Elektra Panthar: TH: also social media, but also robot interactions

[2024/05/17 11:26] Faith Frances (Roxie Marten): I don't need a health and welfare check in, I want friends who want to do things and gets me out of the house.

[2024/05/17 11:27] Firefly Stikeleather (FearlessFirefly Resident): when saying how are you ? I say how has your day been instead.

[2024/05/17 11:28] Shiloh e. (Shiloh Emmons): In SL? besides groups in SL to socialize, I have projects to create.. but love doing chess and scrabble in SL ... It is hard to be lonely in SL or bored !!

[2024/05/17 11:27] Elektra Panthar: TH: I would to discuss about what you think you could do, what we can do to assess our loneliness and the loneliness of our loved ones and how to remedy that

What kinds of support you have and what support you can get

In short loneliness is a public health issue

There are 4 key approaches to assess it

Thank you everyone

[2024/05/17 11:28] Zri Avian (Zri Portal): clap claps!

[2024/05/17 11:28] Sofia Varela: thank you!

[2024/05/17 11:28] Roxksie Logan: thank you

[2024/05/17 11:28] Itico (Itico Spectre): Thank you so much for your excellent presentation.

[2024/05/17 11:28] Firefly Stikeleather (FearlessFirefly Resident): thank you

[2024/05/17 11:28] Shiloh e. (Shiloh Emmons): thank you for an interesting presentation

[2024/05/17 11:29] Stealth (Cicero Kit): Thank you for this presentation

[2024/05/17 11:28] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): Please preface chat ?'s with Q: or ?: so we can differentiate between audience questions and audience discussion (both are encouraged!).

[2024/05/17 11:28] Gentle Heron: Thank you Tiago for sharing your experiences and your research with us. You can see how interactive our community can be.

QUESTION- Would you consider coming back into SL to collect data, by survey or interview or focus group? Maybe teach us more? Or conduct some loneliness antidotes here?

[2024/05/17 11:28] Elektra Panthar: TH: [I would love it!] it's our responsibility to grow outreach

[2024/05/17 11:29] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): TH: I would love to come back. TY Gentle.

[2024/05/17 11:29] Elektra Panthar: TH Yes I feel so welcome

[2024/05/17 11:29] Buffy Beale: awesome presentation, thank you!

[2024/05/17 11:29] Lyr Lobo: Great session

[2024/05/17 11:30] Rhiannon Chatnoir: This was a fantastic discussion and a relevant topic for all of us. Thank you Tiago

[2024/05/17 11:30] tiagouni Resident: Thank you

[2024/05/17 11:28] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): This question is from chat that has scrolled by:

Q- Faith Frances (roxie.marten): What about love for the older person? Any data on that ?

[2024/05/17 11:30] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): TH: Yes – is the individual to look at a 2nd relationship

Do they feel guilty if thinking of another partner.

It depends.

[2024/05/17 11:31] Elektra Panthar: TH: there is some literature about that, depends on their background, like religion, if they feel guilty starting another relationship after widowhood, if they feel too old to look for love again

I'd love to study more about this

[2024/05/17 11:31] Faith Frances (Roxie Marten): I am 65 and the person you are talking about. I know all about disability, age and loneliness

[2024/05/17 11:32] Gentle Heron: [11:29] Widget Whiteberry: QUESTION:

Related to social isolation, are you looking at the impact of the ongoing COVID pandemic on risk associated with face to face contact as well as the subsequent breakdown of the National Health Service? (That breakdown, as with Public Health in the US, feels to me like large scale abandonment.)

[2024/05/17 11:32] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): TH: to Widget's ? – Yes. Absolutely. It's ahead of UK. They did a study, I'm happy to share that with Gentle who can share it out later.

[2024/05/17 11:32] Widget Whiteberry: Thank you, Gentle

[2024/05/17 11:32] Gentle Heron: [11:29] Polaris Grayson: Comment: I watched Sword Art Online II anime where a hospital ridden character used VR to socialize. I'm an introvert, but I will be 20 here in a week.

[2024/05/17 11:33] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): TH: to Polaris – Absolutely, you can use. It's a [stigma and a] stereotype [that you all older people on the VR doesn't work], that can or not necessarily be true.

For older adults with dementia, they accepted it very well. they allowed us to do the test. VR can be a fantastic way to recognize your life again, regardless of age

[2024/05/17 11:35] Polaris Grayson: thank you ☺

[2024/05/17 11:34] Wisdomseeker (Lissena Resident): yes, so true :)

[2024/05/17 11:33] Shiloh e. (Shiloh Emmons): I would think children might have been more adversely impacted by social isolation than adults, maybe even older adults. However, children tend to use social media to stay socially connected

[2024/05/17 11:34] Gentle Heron: [11:31] Mook Wheeler. QUESTION: I noticed that all the Loneliness Scales presume very strongly that people *know* what loneliness feels like, that they *know* how to define it, or recognise it, and the associated feelings and effects. A typical question is "Do you feel lonely?" Are they suggesting recognition of loneliness is innate then, and not constructed? Have you ever encountered people who do not understand what 'loneliness' means, so that they cannot describe what they are supposed to feel? If you have, how would you help them?

[2024/05/17 11:34] Shiloh e. (Shiloh Emmons): good, Mook.

[2024/05/17 11:35] Widget Whiteberry: Good question, Mook

[2024/05/17 11:35] Elektra Panthar: right, some neurodivergent people have trouble with proprioception as well

[2024/05/17 11:35] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): TH: to Mook – Fantastic question.

I did struggle with some of the scales. [In those cases that I go to some individual where they might not know what is the concept of loneliness or they feel that concept in a different way, I prefer to use the Campaign to End Loneliness measurement tool because it's more objective, in the point that I am content with my friends and my relationships and you say yes or no, you can analyze that, or I have enough people around to help me at any time, again, very objective question, yes or no. Or my relationships are satisfying and I would want them to be as they are, yes or no. In that case it's easier for you to assess]

It's true there may not be cognizance of loneliness.

My relationship is satisfying ... yes or no. it's easier to access.

Some of the scales are so closed [and so research-based that some of the older adults, cognitively impaired or neurodiverse,] they may struggle to understand the concept

Closing comment: Please e-mail me, my email is on the reference in the box.

[2024/05/17 11:36] Gentle Heron: Afraid we need to end Q&A

[2024/05/17 11:37] Lyr Lobo: Many thanks!

[2024/05/17 11:37] Firefly Stikeleather (FearlessFirefly Resident): thank you

[2024/05/17 11:37] Roxksie Logan: thank you :)

[2024/05/17 11:37] Black Queen Zuidde (R3dDi Resident): thank you

[2024/05/17 11:37] Stealth (Cicero Kit): Great questions as well :)

[2024/05/17 11:37] Buffy Beale: thanks again, great presentation Tiago!

[2024/05/17 11:37] Lilly Croft (LillyCroft Resident): *•,*•,* •☆☆Applause☆ *•,*•,* ★