

# Social Isolation and the Effect on Mental Health in Older Hispanic and Caucasian Patients






# Sycamore, Illinois

Data was collected at the offices of Kishwaukee Medical Associates


Participants were recruited from patients aged 65 and older of Dr. Michael Thornton.

Participants were asked to complete a survey comprised of the Dartmouth COOP, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, the Emotional Bondedness Scale, and basic demographic data.





# Purpose

- To determine how social support and social networks influence feelings of social isolation.
  - To determine how social isolation affects mental health.
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# Hypotheses

- The greater a patient's perception of social isolation, the more likely it is that the person will be at risk for depression and anxiety disorders.
  - The greater the quality of a patient's social network, the less likely they are to report feelings of social isolation.
  - Persons with extensive social networks will report a greater sense of social support.
  - There will be no significant differences between Hispanics and Caucasians in the effect of social isolation on their mental health.
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# Demographics of Participants

- 70% married
  - 53.3% female
  - 70% live with their spouse
  - 66.7% caucasian, 3.3% hispanic
  - 55.2% had completed the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Average age of 74 years
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# Results

- 62% rated health status as good/excellent.
  - 25% identified as at risk for depression.
  - 67% reported receiving "as much social support as they wanted."
  - 72% rated quality of life as "pretty good/very well."
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# Results of Analysis

- Feelings of anxiety/depression are associated with lower reported social support ( $r=.49$ ;  $p=.13$ ) and family support ( $r=.40$ ;  $p=.038$ ).
  - Feelings of anxiety/depression are correlated with lower self-reported health status ( $r=.35$ ;  $p=.075$ ).
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- Women were more likely to indicate being bothered by anxiety/depression ( $p=.004$ ).
  - Age was not associated with anxiety/depression or with social and family support.
  - Not being married tended to be associated with feelings of anxiety and depression ( $p=.079$ ).
  - People with a higher level of education were more likely to indicate support from family members in meeting health care needs.
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# Conclusions and Future Directions

- More data is needed from hispanic patients to adequately make comparisons between ethnic groups.
  - Social support and living situations must be addressed in the delivery of health care in the primary care setting.
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