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Project Title

Examining the associations between psychological distress, allostatic load, and cognitive function among older adults: the moderating role of sexual orientation

Project Summary

The effects of chronic stress on cognitive health are well documented in the literature; however, there is a paucity of research examining the association between chronic stress and cognitive health in 2SLGBTQ+ older adults. Examining this relationship in 2SLGBTQ+ is of particular importance given that they are at greater risk of exposure to psychological distress across the lifespan compared to heterosexual peers. It has been shown that chronic exposure to discrimination among sexual minorities may lead to physiological wear and tear of stress-sensitive systems, also known as allostatic load. With an aging 2SLGBTQ+ population, it is important to understand factors that contribute to cognitive health in later adulthood. The proposed project will examine the association between self-reported and biological stress (i.e., allostatic load) and cognitive functioning, and to determine whether this negative impact of chronic stress on cognition is stronger among 2SLGBTQ+ middle-aged and older adults.

Keywords

stress, allostatic load, cognition, sexuality, 2SLGBTQ+