

Applicant

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Project Title

Understanding loneliness and allostatic load among older adults: differences by sex, social support and sleep

Project Summary

Loneliness has been associated with worse health among older adults. Loneliness may influence health through the accumulation of prolonged stress which impairs healthy biological functioning of multiple systems in our bodies, contributing to poor health outcomes over time. Previous evidence finds loneliness has been linked with increased stress response (e.g. higher blood pressure, activation of the immune system), with limited attention to chronic stress. The purpose of our study is to determine the relationship between loneliness and chronic stress among older Canadian adults. Additionally, we will see if this relationship is influenced by sex, social support, and sleep quality/quantity. Our study will illustrate how loneliness may 'get under skin', and whether these pathways may differ by sex. We will demonstrate potential pathways that may dampen the relationship between loneliness and stress, specifically through social support and sleep.

Keywords

Loneliness, allostatic load, social support, sex, sleep