



2015 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
ARTS, HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES & EDUCATION
JANUARY 03 - 06, 2015
ALA MOANA HOTEL, HONOLULU, HAWAII

SOCIAL QUALITY OF LIFE IS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF MENTAL HEALTH AMONG MULTIETHNIC OLDER WOMEN

LAGANA, LUCIANA & ET AL
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Prof. Luciana Lagana
Mr. David Martinez-Alpizar
Ms. Kimberly Arellano
Ms. Arlene Sagastume
Ms. Katherine Gutierrez
Department of Psychology
California State University Northridge

Social Quality of Life is a Significant Predictor of Mental Health among Multiethnic Older Women

Synopsis:

The purpose of the present study was to test the role of age, education, ethnicity, ethnic identity, and social quality of life on mental health in older age. Age was a significant predictor, with more advanced age predicting better, not worse mental health (in contrast with prior literature findings), but it failed to remain fully significant once social quality of life was added to the clinical picture.

Social Quality of Life is a Significant Predictor of Mental Health among Multiethnic Older Women

Arlene Sagastume, Katherine Gutierrez, Kimberly Arellano, David Martinez-Alpizar, and Luciana Lagana'

Department of Psychology, California State University Northridge

Researchers have documented that mental health in older age is related to demographics as well as to socio-cultural factors: for instance, poor mental health is associated with more advanced age (Lee, 2000). Also, other demographic factors such as ethnicity (Wang et al., 2005) and education (Crimmins & Saito, 2001) appear to be related to mental health in older age. Additionally, scholars have reported that social quality of life (Lieberman et al., 2001), perception of social support (Fiori et al., 2006), and acculturation indexes (e.g., ethnic identity; Gonzales et al., 2001) are positively related to older adults' mental health. To contribute to the literature in this research area, the purpose of the present study was to test whether age, education, ethnicity, ethnic identity, and social quality of life predict mental health in older age. Research participants ($N=99$, $Mean\ age=69.14$, $SD=6.579$, $age\ range=60-90$) were community-dwelling, ethnically diverse older women residing in Los Angeles County. Our self-report measures included a *Demographics list*, the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (Phinney, 1992), and the *Older Women's Social Quality of Life Inventory (OWSQLI;* Lagana', Bratly, & Boutakidis, 2011). Additionally, we utilized the mental health portion of the *Medical Outcomes Study 36-item Short Form Health Survey (MOS SF 36;* Ware & Sherbourne, 1992) to quantify mental health. We implemented a hierarchical multiple regression to predict total mental health scores. In block 1 of the regression analysis, education and ethnicity were non-significant predictors of mental health ($p>0.05$). Age was a significant predictor, accounting for 9% of variance in mental health ($unstandardized\ coefficient=.328$, $SE=.166$, $standardized\ coefficient=0.216$, $p<.05$). In

block 2, all the variables from block 1 as well as ethnic identity were non-significant predictors of mental health ($p > .05$); age was only marginally significant ($p = .08$). Social quality of life was the single fully significant predictor in the second step of the analysis, accounting for 16% of variance in mental health, and adding 7% of variance to the block 1 findings (*unstandardized coefficient* = .142, *SE* = .062, *standardized coefficient* = 0.267, $p < .05$). Our results suggest that, regardless of factors such as education, ethnicity, and ethnic identity, higher social quality of life is a significant predictor of better mental health among ethnically diverse older women. Age is also a significant predictor, with more advanced age predicting better, not worse mental health (in contrast with prior literature findings). However, it fails to remain fully significant once social quality of life is added to the clinical picture. A discussion of the clinical implications of our findings is included.