EFFECTS OF PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN LATER LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The study used data from Community Partnerships for Older Adults (CPOA) Program Survey of Older Adults 2002 to identify factors that predict social engagement. Multilevel modeling was used to examine the association of demographic and community-level variables with social engagement.

Nearly all older adults were socially engaged in at least one of the three activities. Gender, education, being retired, good health, one or more number of living children, income, someone to take care in case of emergency and length of stay in the community were significant predictors of social engagement. However, unlike the previous literature, age and marital status were not. Further, influence in making community a better place to live; interest of local officials towards needs and concerns of the older adults; and knowledge of available services significantly predicted social engagement.

This study suggests that community and the relationships within the community are important inspite of individual differences among older adults and therefore Development of resources, supportive services and polices that would promote engagement in various religious, social and family activities among community-dwelling older adults, is desired. In conclusion, consideration of individual characteristics and community variables while designing programs for older adults may increase social engagement.