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Ethnic differences in loneliness, depression, and malnutrition among older adults during covid-19 quarantineAdi Vitman Schorr¹, Itamar Yehuda², Snait Tamir³¹Shamir Research Institute, P.O.B 97 Katsrin, 1290000, Haifa University, Israel²Shamir Research Institute, P.O.B 97 Katsrin, 1290000, Haifa University, Israel; Tel-Hai College, Upper Galilee, 1220800 Israel³Tel-Hai College, Upper Galilee, 1220800 Israel, Laboratory of Human Health and Nutrition Sciences; MIGAL-Galilee Research Institute, P. O. Box 831, Kiryat-Shmona 11016, Israel

Depression in older adults may result from a variety of reasons such as loneliness feelings and malnutrition. Objective: To examine the direct and indirect effect of loneliness feelings on depressive symptoms, mediated by malnutrition, among older adults from different cultures during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic quarantine. Method: A convenience sample of 100 Arab and 100 Jewish older adults aged 65 and over was interviewed. Using bootstrapping, we tested the strength and significance of the conditional indirect effect of malnutrition (mediator) on the relationship between loneliness feelings and depressive symptoms. Results: The relationship between loneliness feelings and depressive symptoms was mediated by malnutrition and Arab older adults reported a higher level than Jewish older adults of loneliness, depression, and malnutrition during the Covid-19 pandemic quarantine. Conclusions and implications: To reduce loneliness feelings, depressive symptoms, and malnutrition in times of crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential to develop new communication methods for and with older adults in general, with particular attention paid to ethnic differences, that will be effective in reducing loneliness and in promoting nutrition intervention. Possible solutions include new social network technologies for reducing loneliness, with continued reliance on phone communication for combined intervention that includes psychological support accompanied by instructions for a healthy lifestyle and malnutrition prevention.

Biography

Adi Vitman Schorr main research field is Environmental and Spatial Gerontology, meaning the exploration of various aspects of aging, while focusing on its spatial/geographical nature in the broad sense. It involves the investigation of the changing human aspect - different population groups, different cultures - as well as examining the changing spatial-geographical aspects, i.e., different types of settlements, different areas, the suburbs vs. the city, established areas compared to less established areas, and rural vs. urban regions. The importance of this research is the understanding that the form of residence, place of residence and of course, human, physical and cultural characteristics, influence the nature and quality of aging. This area of research allows for a good understanding of the different needs that characterize the different regions and population groups.

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