

How loneliness affects end-of-life experiences

March 4 2020



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In a study of Americans over age 50 years who died between 2004 and 2014, individuals who were characterized as lonely based on survey results were burdened by more symptoms and received more intense end-of-life care compared with non-lonely people.

In the 2,896-participant study, which is published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, one-third of adults were lonely. In addition to having an increased likelihood of experiencing burdensome symptoms at the end of life, lonely individuals were more likely to use [life support](#) in the last 2 years of life (35.5% versus 29.4%) and more likely to die in a nursing home (18.4% versus 14.2%) than non-lonely individuals.

"Loneliness is a pervasive psychosocial phenomenon with profound implications for the health and wellbeing of older adults throughout the life continuum, and particularly at the end of life," said lead author Nauszley Abedini, MD, MSc, of the University of Michigan. "We must do more—as [healthcare providers](#), but also as a society—to screen for and intervene on loneliness not just during the dying process, but before the end of life period."

More information: Nauszley C. Abedini et al, The Relationship of Loneliness to End-of-Life Experience in Older Americans: A Cohort Study, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.16354](#)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: How loneliness affects end-of-life experiences (2020, March 4) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-loneliness-affects-end-of-life.html>

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