

# Community engagement tied to less inpatient care in older adults

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More social, cultural, and community engagement (SCCE) is associated

with more dental and outpatient care utilization and reduced inpatient care among older adults, according to a study published online April 4 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Qian Gao, Ph.D., from University College London, and colleagues examined associations between SCCE and [health care utilization](#) among participants in the U.S. Health and Retirement Study (12,412 adults aged 50 years or older; 2008 to 2016 waves).

The researchers found that when adjusting for confounders in short-term, two-year follow-up, more SCCE was associated with shorter hospital stays, greater odds of outpatient surgery and dental care, and lower odds of home health care and nursing home stays. In six years of follow-up (8,635 [older adults](#)), compared with consistent SCCE, reduced SCCE or consistent nonparticipation in SCCE was associated with more inpatient care utilization but lower levels of subsequent outpatient physician care and [dental care](#) utilization.

"SCCE may have a protective association in shaping beneficial early and preventive health care-seeking behavior and potentially facilitate the decentralization of the health care system, reducing demand for inpatient and community health care," the authors write. "The reality of this potential remains to be explored further through in-depth evaluations of social prescribing within health and social care systems using a systems approach."

**More information:** Qian Gao et al, Associations of Social, Cultural, and Community Engagement With Health Care Utilization in the US Health and Retirement Study, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.6636](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.6636)

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