

Social isolation tied to higher risk for nursing home entry

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Social isolation is a significant risk factor for nursing home use among

older adults, according to a study published online July 24 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Mary Louise Pomeroy, Ph.D., from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues evaluated whether higher levels of social isolation are associated with overnight hospitalization, skilled nursing facility stays, and nursing home placement among a nationally representative sample of 11,517 community-dwelling [older adults](#).

The researchers found that approximately 15 percent of community-dwelling older U.S. adults experienced social isolation, which was significantly associated with increased odds of nursing home placement (odds ratio, 2.01) and skilled nursing facility stays (odds ratio, 1.16) over two years. For every point increase in social isolation score, the estimated probability of nursing home placement or a skilled nursing facility stay increased by 0.5 and 0.4 percentage points, respectively. However, higher levels of social isolation were not associated with two-year hospitalization rates.

"This [cohort study](#) found that [social isolation](#) was a significant risk factor for nursing home use among older adults," the authors write. "Efforts to deter or delay nursing home entry should seek to enhance [social contact](#) at home or in community settings. The design and assessment of interventions that optimize the social connections of older adults have the potential to improve their health trajectories and outcomes."

More information: Mary Louise Pomeroy et al, Association of Social Isolation With Hospitalization and Nursing Home Entry Among Community-Dwelling Older Adults, *JAMA Internal Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2023.3064](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2023.3064)

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