

Predicting the quality of life for older adults

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As a growing number of baby boomers retire, our society will have more older adults than ever before, so it is crucial to determine what predicts quality of life in older age. A joint study from the University of Alberta and University of Victoria, recently published in *Research in Nursing & Health*, has uncovered that there are predictors of quality of life for older adults.

A replication study of 432 older adults was undertaken to validate a model of quality of life generated in an earlier study on a random sample of older adults. The replicated study indicated that financial resources, health and meaning in life directly and positively influenced a person's quality of life and health, while emotional support and the physical environment indirectly affected quality of life through the older adult's sense of purpose in life.

As previous research has stated, emotional support, companionship and intimacy have been found to have a moderate to strong positive effect upon quality of life and even enhance quality of life over time among cancer patients. Other significant factors include residing in a desirable living space and physical surroundings, and physical environments with few barriers to activity.

"Replication studies are rarely undertaken to further validate models of quality of life, yet the results are so important," said Dr. Gail Low, University of Alberta researcher. "To fully understand what predicts a person's quality of life, further explorations of the influence of spirituality, emotionally close ties and opportunities for active engagement on quality of life in older age are warranted."

Source: University of Alberta

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