Accounting for the social context in the effects of social networks, social support, and loneliness on the health and quality of life of older people: NZLSA 2010 results.

Christine Stephens*, Christopher Stichbury*, and Jack Noone#

Massey University* and University of Sydney#

The New Zealand Longitudinal Study of Ageing: Findings and Policy Implications
Chair: Associate Professor Judith Davey
Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.
Thursday June 28, 2012
Social Connections and Health
Berkman et al. Model

Macro-level

- Education
- Age
- Economic Living Standards
- Ethnicity
- Gender

Mezzo-level

Social Networks

Micro-level

Social Support

Health Outcomes

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
Health Work and Retirement 2006

- Social Support (DV)
  - Age
  - Gender
  - ELSI
  - Education
  - Family Network
  - Integrated Network
  - Self-Cont. Network
  - Private Network
  - Wider Network

- Physical and Mental Health (DV)
  - Loneliness*
  - Social Support
Health Work and Retirement
2006-2008
NZLSA measures 2010

**Physical and Mental health:** SF12v2. (QualityMetric)

**Quality of Life:**
- CASP-12 (Wiggins et al., 2008)
- WHOQoL-8

**Social Support:** Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987).

**Social Networks:** Wenger Network Assessment Instrument

**Loneliness:** De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (de Jong Gierveld et al., 2009).

**Living Standards:** Economic Living Standards Index – Short Form (2008).
Local family dependent
Locally integrated
Local self-contained
Wider community focused
Private restricted

Social network type

Social support score
Social support score vs.loneliness score across different social network types.

- **Local family dependent**
- **Locally integrated**
- **Local self-contained**
- **Wider community focused**
- **Private restricted**

The chart shows a comparison of social support scores and loneliness scores across five social network types. Higher scores indicate greater social support and lower loneliness.
Correlations with downstream outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SF12 Physical Health</th>
<th>SF12 Mental Health</th>
<th>QoL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
<td>-.54*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .001
Local family dependent
Locally integrated
Local self-contained
Wider community focused
Private restricted

Social network type

Living Standards Score

25
24
23
22
21
20
19

19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Private restricted
Wider community focused
Local self-contained
Locally integrated
Local family dependent
Severe hardship
Significant hardship
Some hardship
Fairly comfortable
Comfortable
Good
Very good

Living Standards

Social Support score

50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85
Implications

• Social support and health.
• The effects of socio-economic status and other broader social factors are important.
• Social networks help to explain the provision of social support.
• The example of Housing.
References


