Loneliness and Social Connections: A National Survey of Adults 45 and Older

Loneliness and social isolation are public health issues that affect millions of older adults in the U.S.

The Problem

1 in 3 U.S. adults age 45 and older are lonely.

Since 2010, approximately 5 million more midlife and older adults are lonely due to growth in this age group among the population.

Who is affected

Unpaid caregivers, low-income individuals, and those who identify as LGBTQ are at increased risk for chronic loneliness.

For individuals earning under $40,000 per year, the gap in loneliness is 13 percentage points higher than for those earning over $40,000.

Tech helps

Technology holds promise to help reduce loneliness and social isolation, but it is not a substitute for human interaction.

Individuals who have met their “online friends” in person are less likely to identify as lonely than those who are keeping the relationship strictly online (37% vs. 46%).

Talk to your neighbors

Getting to know one’s neighbors can help reduce loneliness and increase social connections.

Lonely adults are twice as likely to consider their neighbors “strangers” than those who are not lonely (26% vs. 13%).

Did you know?

Social isolation and loneliness have serious financial implications. Medicare spends an estimated $6.7 billion in additional spending each year on socially isolated older adults.

The health risks of prolonged isolation are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

For the full report visit: https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00246.003