



Changes in Subjective Well-Being in Older Adults as a Result of Ongoing Life Changes: Do Country Characteristics Matter?

The 7th SHARE User Conference
October 2022

About Myers-JDC-Brookdale



Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is Israel's leading center for **applied social research**.



Through our studies, **we identify and examine** key societal challenges in order to help inform policy, advise programming, and improve services for individuals, families, and communities.



We work to **strengthen Israeli society** and the wellbeing of all groups among its diverse population.



Purposes of the Study



Subjective well-being is perceived as a major factor of successful aging

- To illuminate the role of country characteristics in strengthening or weakening the links between on-going life changes and subjective well-being in older adults by:
 - Identification of factors that are associated with well-being in elderly
 - Identification of ongoing life changes that are associated with changes in the level of well-being in elderly
 - Specific country characteristics and the capacity of their governmental agencies to provide effective interventions to enhance older adults' well-being



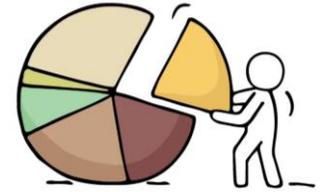
Research Questions



- What are the predictor variables for well-being in older adults?
- What is the impact of common ongoing life changes on well-being in older adults?
- What is the role of country characteristics on well-being in older adults?



Data



- Longitudinal and cross-national data of participants aged 50+ in waves 5 and 6 from the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe
- Dependent variables:
 - Quality of Life Scale (CASP-19)
 - Subjective satisfaction with life
 - EURO-D depression scale
- Independent variables:
 - Socio-demographic variables
 - Employment and retirement
 - Financial status
 - Health and disability
 - Countries by region (Western, Eastern, Northern, Southern)



Sample



Regions

- Western countries:
Austria, Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg
- Northern countries: Sweden, Denmark
- Southern countries: Spain, Italy, Israel
- Eastern countries: Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia

Results:

General Predictor Variables



Wave 6	CASP	Satisfaction with life	EURO depression scale
Gender (Female)		Positive	Positive
Education		Negative	Negative
Children and Grandchildren		Positive	
Age		Positive	Positive
Marital Status (Married)		Positive	
Size of SN	Negative	Negative	Positive
SN satisfaction	Positive	Positive	Negative
Health (Better health)	Positive	Positive	Negative
Disability - Higher level of disability (ADL)	Negative	Negative	Positive
Financial Status		Positive	Negative
Employment (Retired vs Employed)	Positive	Negative	Negative
Older employees (75+)		Positive	Positive

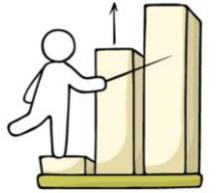


Results: Role of Countries Characteristics

- CASP-19 score in the western countries is higher than in the northern and eastern countries
- Satisfaction with life in the southern counties is the lowest and significantly lower than in the western and northern countries
- The impact of health situation and financial level is stronger in the western and eastern countries



Ongoing Life Changes in Older Adults



Ongoing life changes that occurred between waves 5 and 6 included:

- Retirement (before or after the retirement age)
- Health
- Disability level
- Marital status (widowed or divorced)
- Financial level



Results:

Predictors for Changes in Well-Being Indicators

Wave 5-6	CASP-19	Satisfaction with life	EURO depression scale
Retirement		Positive	
Worse Health Situation	Negative	Negative	Positive
Better Health Situation	Positive		Negative
Change in the Marital Status			Positive
Worse Financial Level		Negative	
Better Financial Level	Positive		
Lower ADL Index		Positive	



Results: Role of Countries Characteristics

- No significant correlation between different regions and changes in CASP / life satisfaction / depression
- The reduction in the level of satisfaction with life that is associated with worse financial level is (slightly) moderated in the western countries



Discussion and Implementation



Employment for older adults:

- Raising the age of retirement is actuarially justified. However, whether a higher retirement age will result in enhanced well-being for older adults is doubtful.
- Policy makers should consider to provide an adequate support
 - Better understanding of the relationship between job quality and older adults' well-being
 - Consideration of increasing retirement age selectively
 - Promotion of suitable professional training



Discussion and Implementation



Country characteristics and subjective well-being of older adults:

The literature widely discusses the impact of countries characteristics and welfare regimes on the quality of life of their citizens.

However, this study concludes that these variables have limited effect on the subjective well-being of older adults and there is a need to improve interventions concerning other significant variables, such as:

- A more comprehensive response to older adults experiencing health deterioration.
- Greater support for older adults with financial insecurity.

Thank you



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