

In This Issue

May is Older Americans Month and the E4 Center has many exciting opportunities for education and training in older adult behavioral health. The E4 Center will be participating in the **National Fourth Annual Mental Health Awareness Day**, sponsored by SAMHSA and the National Coalition on Aging. Click [HERE](#) for more opportunities to learn.

In this quarter's Hot Topics Newsletter, we feature the latest research that highlights racial and socioeconomic disparities in older adult mental health and promotes multicultural competence at many levels of care. We also digest the newest research exploring older adult resilience in diverse populations.



Work Examining Diverse Groups and Promoting Cultural Competence

[Race and Ethnic Group Disparities in Emotional Distress during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Bui and colleagues examined data from the Household Pulse Study (HPS) to determine the relationship between 4 types of COVID-19 stressors (including losses of income, housing, health care, and food resources) and emotional distress in diverse groups of older adults. They found that older persons of color reported higher levels of pandemic-related stressors (resource loss) and emotional distress compared to white older adults. Relationships between stressors and emotional distress varied by racial and ethnic groups in interesting ways.

[Progress in Reducing the Racial Disparity in Dementia Prevalence](#)

Power and colleagues compare dementia prevalence and relative incidence in non-Hispanic black and white Americans to determine if trends in racial disparities have changed from 2000 to 2016. Data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) continue to show that non-Hispanic black Americans have higher incidence and prevalence of dementia compared to their white counterparts. There was not evidence of any reduction in the racial disparity of dementia risk between black and white Americans.

[Depressive Symptoms among Older, Low SES African American Women with Uncontrolled Hypertension](#)

Gabriel and colleagues examined depressive symptoms in 316 African American women between the ages of 40-75 with hypertension. They found that 57% had significant depressive symptoms. Increased depressive symptoms were associated with less education, number of chronic medical conditions, and smoking. Results highlight the importance of depression screening for African American women presenting to clinics with hypertension.

[Adapting a Mental Health and Physical Disability Prevention Intervention for Ethnic Minority Elders in the Community Setting](#)

Falgas-Bague and colleagues, outline their process in culturally adapting two evidence-based interventions into one program aimed to improve mental health and physical disability prevention. This program was developed to be administered by community health workers and is adaptable to many ethnically diverse groups. The team followed the Castro-Barrera stepped model for culturally adapting interventions. This work provides a helpful roadmap in culturally adapting interventions to reduce the health disparities among underserved and vulnerable groups.

Highlights in Resilience

Resilience and Coping in Older Adults during the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Fuller and colleagues collected data from phone interviews asking about older adults' experiences with social distancing in the early weeks of the pandemic shutdowns. Results in this Midwestern sample of 76 older adults found that perceived coping was rated highly, with 87% of participants rating their coping positively. Commonly reported coping strategies were primarily emotion-focused and included staying busy, seeking social support, and having a positive mindset.

Successful Aging and Resilience in Older Veterans

Pietrzak and colleagues report recent data from the 2019-2020 National Health and Resilience in Veterans Study, which is a nationally representative sample of 3,001 US older veterans. They found that nearly 80% of older veterans rated themselves as aging successfully. Physical and mental health problems were the strongest correlates of successful aging. Psychosocial factors such as perceived resilience, purpose in life, and positive expectation about aging were also strongly correlated with successful aging.



Written for the E4 Center by Susan Buehler, PhD

Increase in Elder Abuse during the Pandemic- Risk and Resilience Factors

Chang and Levy estimate that prevalence of elder abuse during the pandemic had increased 84% from prevalence estimates made prior to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. Nearly 900 Americans were surveyed in the early months of the pandemic. One out of 5 older adults reported abuse. Community engagement and physical distancing were related to reduced risk of abuse. Although the finding of physical distancing as a protective factor seems counterintuitive, the authors provide very insightful hypotheses for why this finding emerged.

Upcoming Events

You can register for these events or learn more by going to our website at e4center.org/calendar

MAY

Reframing Aging Initiative Series begins

May 4 & 18, June 8 & 22

E4 Learning Community: Lessons Learned from the Positive Minds Strong Bodies Trial on Disability Prevention for Racial/Ethnic Minority Elders

May 13 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm CDT

JUNE

Interpersonal Psychotherapy Training Series

June 14, 21, & 28

Implementation of Older Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Practices (Part 2)

June 23 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm CDT

Get to know the other two
Centers of Excellence in
Behavioral Health Disparities:



Center of Excellence in LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity



African American Behavioral Health
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

African American Behavioral
Health Center of Excellence