

In This Issue

May is Older American's Month, and the E4 Center has many exciting events planned to celebrate the older adult community and elevate issues to help support their behavioral health needs, including the [6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium](#).

In this month's *Hot Topics Newsletter*, we feature the latest research exploring disparities in depression and the associated risk and protective factors among older adults from diverse and marginalized communities. This work is invaluable in building our understanding of why disparities exist in mental health and health care and can help inform targeted treatments and culturally-competent programs and interventions. Central to E4 Center's mission is working to engage healthcare providers to close these gaps in care to more equitably serve older adults in all communities. For more information, please check the [E4 Events Calendar](#).



Depression Disparities in Diverse Older Americans

[Depressive Multimorbidity and Trajectories of Functional Status among Older Americans: Differences by Racial/Ethnic Group](#) *JAMDA. February, 2023*

Botosaneanu and colleagues analyzed data over 16,000 community-dwelling older adults from the Health and Retirement Study to determine the effect of depressive multimorbidity on activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living function over time and to determine differences between racial/ethnic groups (non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic White Americans). Their results showed that older adults with a combination of somatic diseases and higher depressive symptoms experienced more functional limitations over time and that this trajectory was more pronounced in those from racial/ethnic minority groups. These results provide further support for depression screening in older adults, particularly for those who may experience socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

[Social Stressors and Health Among Older Transgender and Gender Diverse Veterans](#) *LGBT Health. March, 2023*

Jasuja and colleagues report on health disparities in 1244 older transgender and gender diverse (TGD) veterans compared to 3732 cisgender older adults who were matched based on age and VHA site care usage characteristics. Older TGD veterans have lower levels of substance use and anxiety, but higher rates of depression,

Alzheimer's disease, cancer, violence, barriers to healthcare access, and military sexual trauma compared to their cisgender peers. TGD older adults also reported higher counts of psychosocial stressors. These findings contribute to a much needed body of research to better understand the needs of older adults in this community.

[Resiliency among Women's Health Initiative women aged 80 and older by race, ethnicity, and neighborhood socioeconomic status](#) *Journals of Gerontology: Series B. March, 2023*

Krok-Schoen and colleagues report data on resilience in nearly 30,000 older women (≥ 80 years old) from the Women's Health Initiative. Their results did not demonstrate differences in resilience based on race/ethnic groups, but did find that older women from higher neighborhood socioeconomic status (NSES) areas reported higher levels of resilience compared to women from lower NSES areas. Older age, higher education, higher self-rated health, lower stress, and living alone were also associated with higher resilience. The authors also report on specific correlates of resilience, such as depression, between racial ethnic groups, shedding light on who may benefit most from interventions targeting resilience.

Race–Ethnicity and Depressive Symptoms Among U.S. Older Adults in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Uncovering the Counterbalancing Mechanisms *Innovation in Aging*. January, 2023

Li and Luo examined 1,717 older adults from the Health and Retirement Study COVID-19 Project to determine the counteracting roles of COVID-19-related stressors and psychological resilience in explaining racial/ethnic disparities in depressive symptoms. They found that although minority older adults reported higher depressive symptoms due to higher COVID-19 risk exposure factors, they had higher levels of resilience which might have counteracted the effects of this risk. Their analyses also support the idea that interventions focused on social isolation and economic impact might want to target minority vulnerability.

Racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in trajectories of morbidity accumulation among older Americans *SSM – Population Health*. June, 2023

O’Neill and colleagues analyzed data from nearly 14,000 older adults from the Health and Retirement Study between 1998 and 2016 to examine trajectories of multimorbidity accumulation (how older adults accumulate multiple chronic health conditions over time). They found three general trajectories: low (80%; starting with few conditions and accumulating them slowly), increasing (9%; starting with few conditions, but accumulating more rapidly), and high (11%; starting with more conditions and increasing slowly). Their data show relationships among race, ethnicity, and education on morbidity trajectory. They also found that racial disparities decreased with increasing wealth.

Longitudinal Associations Between Loneliness and Self-Rated Health Among Black and White Older Adults *Journals of Gerontology: Series B*. April, 2023

Sol and colleagues report on their longitudinal analysis of loneliness and self-rated health (SRH) in 1,407 non-Hispanic Black and White older adults. Loneliness and SRH were assessed in three waves of the study. There were no racial differences in loneliness at any wave of the study. Their results suggest that worse SRH at later midlife might increase risk for loneliness in later life. This relationship was stronger in white older adults. These findings highlight differences in how Black and White older adults experience SRH and loneliness and can inform development of culturally competent interventions.

Geographic Region, Racial/Ethnic Disparities, and Late-Life Depression: Results From a Large US Cohort of Older Adults *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. June, 2022

Vyas and colleagues examined late life depression (LLD) characteristics across various US geographic regions and racial/ethnic groups. They found that LLD severity and symptom burden differed by region, such that older adults in the Midwest had lower LLD severity and item-level symptom burden compared to peers in the Northeast. However, higher LLD severity and symptom burden were found in racial/ethnic minority groups in this region. There were no significant differences in racial disparities in care by region, but older black participants were overall less likely to receive care compared to non-Hispanic whites.

Upcoming Events

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

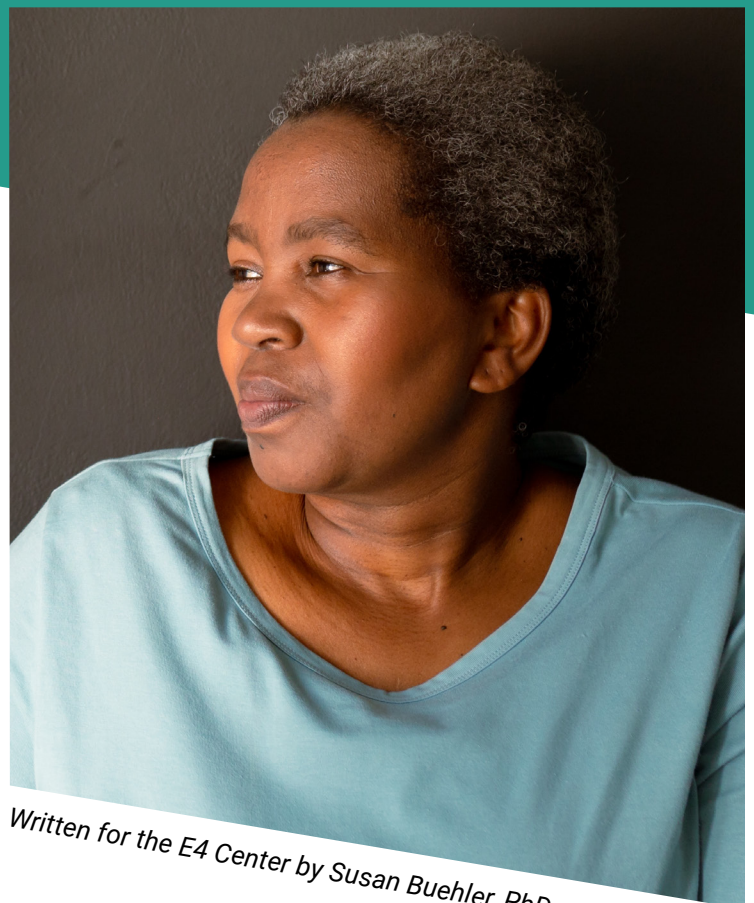
MAY

Valued Social Roles in Older Adults with Serious Mental Illness

May 3
@ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm CDT

The 6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium

May 11
@ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm CDT



Written for the E4 Center by Susan Buehler, PhD