

Persistence of Social Exclusion Among Older People in Australia

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Introduction

- Limited literature on social exclusion of older people
- Some research finds older Australians fare better than other cohorts on a range of hardship and deprivation measures (e.g., Wilkins, Warren and Hahn, 2009, 'Fourth statistical report of the HILDA survey'). However, cumulative disadvantage may create high risk of persistent social exclusion among (a potentially small group of) older people (Naughtin, 2008, 'Social exclusion and older people')
- Main tasks:
 - examining the persistence of social exclusion in key dimensions with selected indicators for older people in Australia
 - investigating what factors may be protecting older people from experiencing persistent social exclusion (for example, educational attainment, and employment history)
- This is work in progress (at this stage focuses on Task 1)

Data and sample

- Data: the first eight waves of Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey (2001-2008)
- Sample: aged 55 years and older at Wave 1 (2001) (Sample 1: aged 55-64 years; Sample 2: aged 65 or older)
- Balanced panel data of 2,162 individuals (1,102 in Sample 1)

Preliminary results - persistence

Dimension	(a) Being excluded in two consecutive years (% of people who experienced social exclusion in the previous year) †			(b) Being excluded in five or more years (% of all)		
	Sample 1	Sample 2	Total	Sample 1	Sample 2	Total
Material resources	60.13 (16.23)	44.94 (13.54)	53.29 (14.89)	11.12	7.46	9.29
Participation	52.60 (7.79)	58.07 (12.44)	55.89 (10.02)	3.35	5.46	4.39
Social support	37.31 (9.77)	33.39 (9.59)	35.40 (9.68)	3.56	2.52	3.05
Community engagement	49.49 (14.10)	45.69 (14.51)	47.56 (14.30)	7.30	7.87	7.58
Exclusion in two or more dimensions	50.29 (10.03)	39.60 (9.54)	45.07 (9.78)	5.75	4.23	5.00

Note: based on balanced panel of HILDA Waves 1 to 8 (2001-2008); weighted with responding person longitudinal weights.

† % of people reporting exclusion on the dimension(s) in brackets; only 0.4% of the sample experienced exclusion in all the four dimensions.

Key dimensions and indicators

I. Material resources

Exclusion = true in ANY of the following indicators:

- Could not pay electricity, gas or telephone bills on time
- Could not pay the mortgage or rent on time
- Asked for financial help from friends or family
- Pawned or sold something
- Was unable to heat home
- Went without meals
- Asked for help from welfare/community organisations
- Could not raise \$2,000 in emergency

II. Participation

Exclusion = true in ALL of the following indicators:

- Not worked for wage or salary
- Not worked in own business
- Not enrolled in a full-time course
- Note enrolled in a part-time course
- Not an active club member
- Contact with friends/relatives once a month or less
- Not volunteering

III. Social support

Exclusion = true in FIVE or MORE of the following indicators:

- I don't have anyone that I can confide in (agree)
- There is someone who can always cheer me up when I'm down (disagree)
- I seem to have a lot of friends (disagree)
- I have no one to lean on in times of trouble (agree)
- I often need help from other people but can't get it (agree)
- I enjoy the time I spend with the people who are important to me (disagree)
- People don't come to visit me as often as I would like (agree)
- When I need someone to help me out, I can usually find someone (disagree)
- When something's on my mind, just talking with the people I know can make me feel better (disagree)
- I often feel very lonely (agree)

IV. Community engagement

Exclusion = true in ANY of the following indicators:

- Dissatisfaction - feeling part of your local community
- Dissatisfaction - the neighbourhood in which you live
- Dissatisfaction - how safe you feel

Limitations

- Some key dimensions are not covered due to data limitations (e.g., access to services is not available)
- Non-random attrition and missing values

Discussion

- Only a small proportion of older people experience exclusion in multiple dimensions, but where they do, there is a relatively high level of persistence
- What's next?** Multiple regression analysis on factors protecting people from experiencing persistent exclusion