

Influence of behavioral and attitudinal factors on physical and mental health of older adults in a Brazilian city

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Background: Despite major advancements in understanding of the factors associated with mental health in older adults, studies assessing positive behaviours, attitudes and virtues are still scarce in the literature.

Methods: A population-based, cross-sectional study of Brazilian older adults who were users of the public health system and seen by Family Health teams. Instruments were applied to assess cognition, physical activity, sleep, quality of life, social support, religiousness, spirituality, satisfaction with life, resilience, altruism, volunteerism, loneliness, meaning in life and mental health (i.e. depression, anxiety and stress). Analyses were carried out using linear and logistic regression models.

Results: A total of 534 older adults were included. Positive behavioural factors and values including volunteerism, meaning in life, resilience, peace, loneliness, faith and religiousness were associated with mental health outcomes (i.e. depression, anxiety and stress), as were traditional factors, such as sleep, gender, social support and cognitive state.

Conclusions: Aspects related to positive behaviour, attitudes and virtues can impact the mental health of the older population. These results can serve to alert health professionals on the importance of addressing these factors and help guide the implementation of preventive measures and interventions for this age group.

Logistic regression of factors associated with mental health and satisfaction with life.

	OR	Lower	Upper	p	Nagelkerke R Square
Depression					
Mini-mental	0.910	0.863	0.959	<0.001	
Sleep quality	1.046	1.023	1.070	<0.001	
FACIT Peace	0.856	0.771	0.950	0.004	
Volunteerism	0.757	0.574	1.000	0.050	
Loneliness	1.062	1.036	1.089	<0.001	0.330
Anxiety					
Gender Female	2.119	1.338	3.357	0.001	
Mini-Mental	0.947	0.900	0.996	0.035	
Sleep quality	1.077	1.053	1.102	<0.001	
FACIT Peace	0.899	0.813	0.995	0.039	
Loneliness	1.036	1.012	1.061	0.003	0.321
Stress					
Gender Female	2.393	1.417	4.041	0.001	
Sleep quality	1.063	1.037	1.089	<0.001	
Social support	1.736	1.043	2.890	0.034	
FACIT Peace	0.866	0.777	0.965	0.009	
Loneliness	1.054	1.028	1.081	<0.001	
Intrinsic religiosity	0.818	0.708	0.946	0.007	0.338

OR: Odds Ratio

FACIT: Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy

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