UCLA Loneliness Scale Analysis Conceptual Framework

## Sociodemographic Information Variables

### Race/ ethnicity

Studies have shown a significant moderating relationship between race and loneliness and depressive symptoms. The results are mixed. Some studies report higher rated of loneliness in people that identify as white while others report that they are less lonely compared to other racial groups in older age. The relationship between race and loneliness may only be indirect.

#### References

* [Depressive Symptoms and Loneliness Among Black and White Older Adults: The Moderating Effects of Race](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7739884/)
* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Sexual orientation

The results of a study showed that due mainly to a decreased chance of having a partner and, to a lesser degree, lower levels of family support and increased friend strain, older LGB persons experienced much higher degrees of loneliness than their heterosexual counterparts.

#### References

* [Social Relationships and Loneliness in Late Adulthood: Disparities by Sexual Orientation](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jomf.12681)

### Marital Status

It has been found that overall, married older adults are less lonely than unmarried older adults. However, loneliness is more common among people who have ever been married compared to those who haven’t at ages 75 and older. Marital status has been studied both as a binary variable and as a variable with more than 2 categories. Marital status is one of the most important direct determinants of loneliness.

#### References

* [Aging, Marital Status, and Loneliness: Multilevel Analyses of 30 Countries](https://hipatiapress.com/hpjournals/index.php/rasp/article/view/8923/3560)
* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Employment status

Employment status is used as a control variable in many studies on loneliness. The variable may either be binary (employed vs unemployed) or categorical. Being employed is associated with lower levels of loneliness than being unemployed. The relationship between employment status and loneliness may be bidirectional.

#### References

* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Household income

This is usually used as a control variable in loneliness studies. The results of studies on financial status and loneliness are mixed. Some show higher levels of loneliness with lower income, while others show no significant differences. This relationship is possibly indirect.

#### References

* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Veteran status

A study showed that veteran women reported feeling more alone and socially isolated than nonveterans.

#### References

* [Loneliness, social isolation, and cardiovascular disease among nonveteran and veteran women](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08952841.2024.2336655#abstract)

### Sex

Loneliness has been found to be more prominent in women in certain studies but this effect is dependent on other factors such as average life span of men vs women and living alone. In some others, men have been found to report greater intensity of momentary loneliness than women. Sex might be only indirectly related to loneliness.

#### References

* [Predictive factors and risk and protection groups for loneliness in older adults: a population-based study](https://bmcpsychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01708-7#:~:text=By%20focusing%20on%20risk%20groups,highest%20risk%20of%20experiencing%20loneliness.)

* [Momentary loneliness among older adults: Contextual differences and their moderation by gender and race/ethnicity](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8427551/)
* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Age

Loneliness has been found to be more prominent in older people in certain studies, but this effect is dependent on other factors. It is considered to be only indirectly related to loneliness.

#### References

* [Predictive factors and risk and protection groups for loneliness in older adults: a population-based study](https://bmcpsychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01708-7#:~:text=By%20focusing%20on%20risk%20groups,highest%20risk%20of%20experiencing%20loneliness.)

* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Education attainment

Some studies have found that a low education level is associated with loneliness. But other studies have found the opposite. Education attainment may only be indirectly related to loneliness.

#### References

* [Predictive factors and risk and protection groups for loneliness in older adults: a population-based study](https://bmcpsychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01708-7#:~:text=By%20focusing%20on%20risk%20groups,highest%20risk%20of%20experiencing%20loneliness.)
* [Momentary loneliness among older adults: Contextual differences and their moderation by gender and race/ethnicity](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8427551/)
* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

### Household size category

Living alone is strongly associated with loneliness. Loneliness and household size may have a U-shaped association, with older people who live with just one other person experiencing the least amount of loneliness. Men have been found to be more protected against loneliness than women when they live with someone else.

#### References

* [Predictive factors and risk and protection groups for loneliness in older adults: a population-based study](https://bmcpsychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01708-7#:~:text=By%20focusing%20on%20risk%20groups,highest%20risk%20of%20experiencing%20loneliness.)
* [Risk factors for loneliness: A literature review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10523154/)

## PEG 3-Item Pain Assessment

Studies have found that pain is associated with an increased risk of loneliness.

#### References

* [Pain as a Risk Factor for Loneliness Among Older Adults](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0898264317721348)
* [Loneliness Predicts Pain, Depression, and Fatigue: Understanding the Role of Immune Dysregulation](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3633610/)
* [Musculoskeletal pain and loneliness, social support and social engagement among older adults: Analysis of the Oxford Pain, Activity and Lifestyle cohort](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/msc.1526)

## Geriatric Depression Scale Variables

Poor perceived mental health and depressive symptoms are significantly associated with loneliness.

#### References

* [Predictive factors and risk and protection groups for loneliness in older adults: a population-based study](https://bmcpsychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01708-7#:~:text=By%20focusing%20on%20risk%20groups,highest%20risk%20of%20experiencing%20loneliness.)

## Medical Outcomes Study

## Elder Mistreatment Self-Report

### Neglect

“no one is concerned about the older person” and “having no one to turn to for help” are significantly associated with loneliness.

#### References

* [Predictive factors and risk and protection groups for loneliness in older adults: a population-based study](https://bmcpsychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01708-7#:~:text=By%20focusing%20on%20risk%20groups,highest%20risk%20of%20experiencing%20loneliness.)