

# Social Connection and Nutrition

## Promoting Healthy Aging Through Nutrition Research Centers Collaborative Network

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JOHNS HOPKINS  
M E D I C I N E

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# Disclosures

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**Advisory:** Edenbridge Healthcare

# Basic Needs

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# Basic Needs



**FOOD**



**WATER**

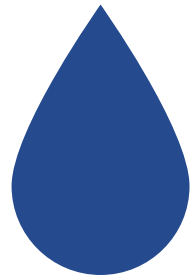


**SHELTER**

# Basic Needs



**FOOD**



**WATER**



**SHELTER**



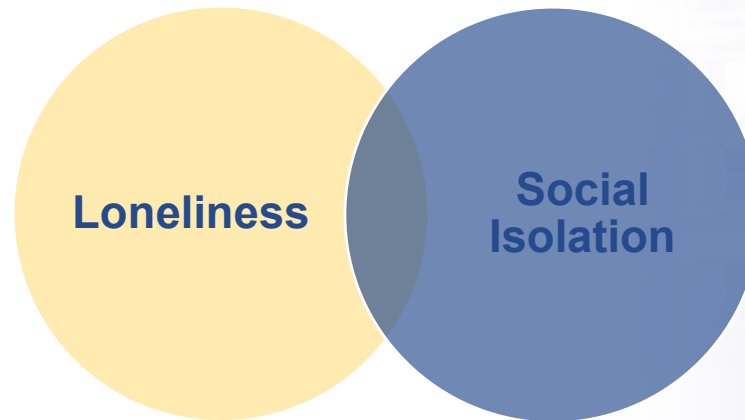
**SOCIAL  
CONNECTION**

# Social Connection intertwined with Nutrition: Federal Policy

The Older America's Act Amendments of 2006, P.L. 109-365, added a new purpose statement for the Nutrition Services Program. The purpose of the program as stipulated in the law is to (1) reduce hunger and food insecurity, (2) **promote socialization of older individuals**, and (3) promote the health and well-being outcomes of older individuals by assisting them in accessing nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.

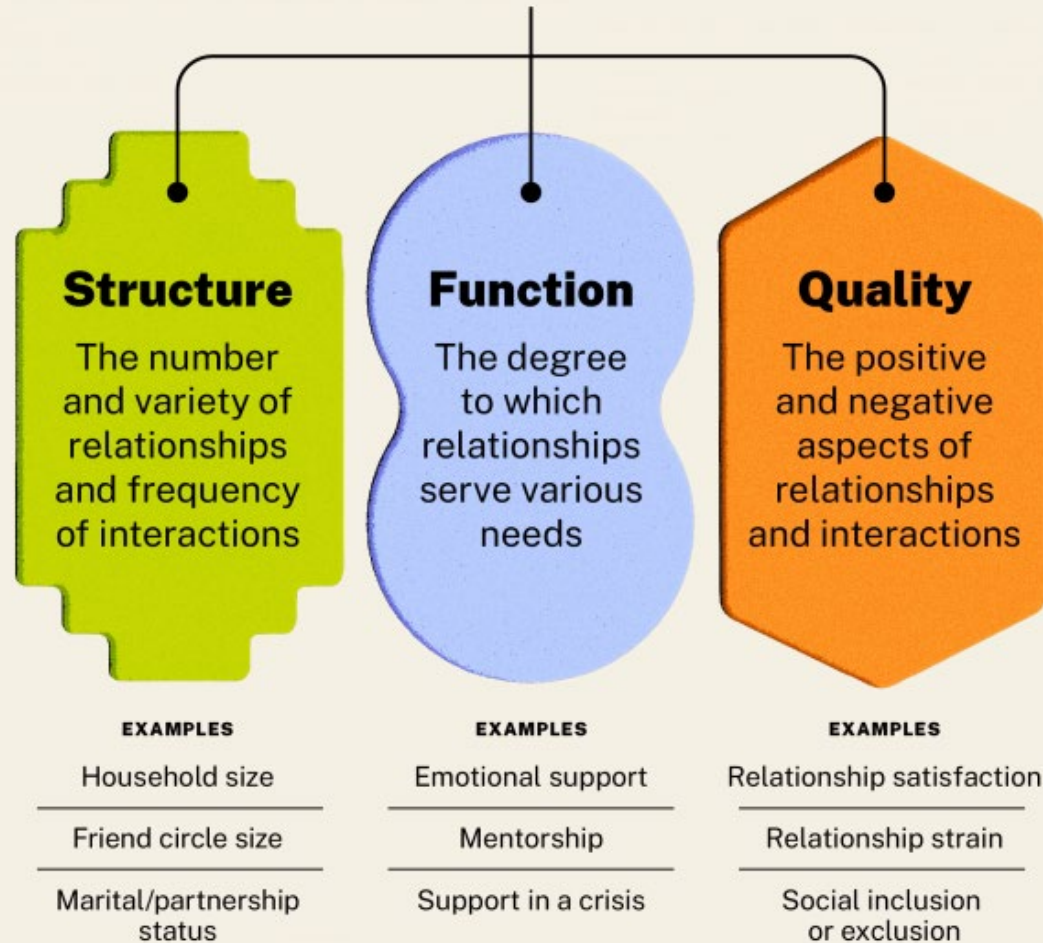
# Social Disconnection

Subjective or objective deficits in social connection, including deficits in relationships and roles, their functions, and/or quality



# The Three Vital Components of Social Connection

The extent to which an individual is socially connected depends on multiple factors, including:



# Loneliness

A subjective distressing experience that results from perceived isolation or inadequate meaningful connections, where inadequate refers to the discrepancy or unmet need between an individual's preferred and actual experience.

# Social Isolation



Objectively having few social relationships, social roles, group memberships, and infrequent social interaction.

# Distinctions

<b>Social Isolation</b>	<b>Loneliness</b>
<b>Objective:</b> being isolated– like quarantine	<b>Subjective:</b> feeling isolated
Low levels of social contact	Mismatch between actual and desired social relationships
Not necessarily unpleasant, possibly preferred	Emotionally distressing and unpleasant
May be chosen: “solitude”	Low sense of control or choice

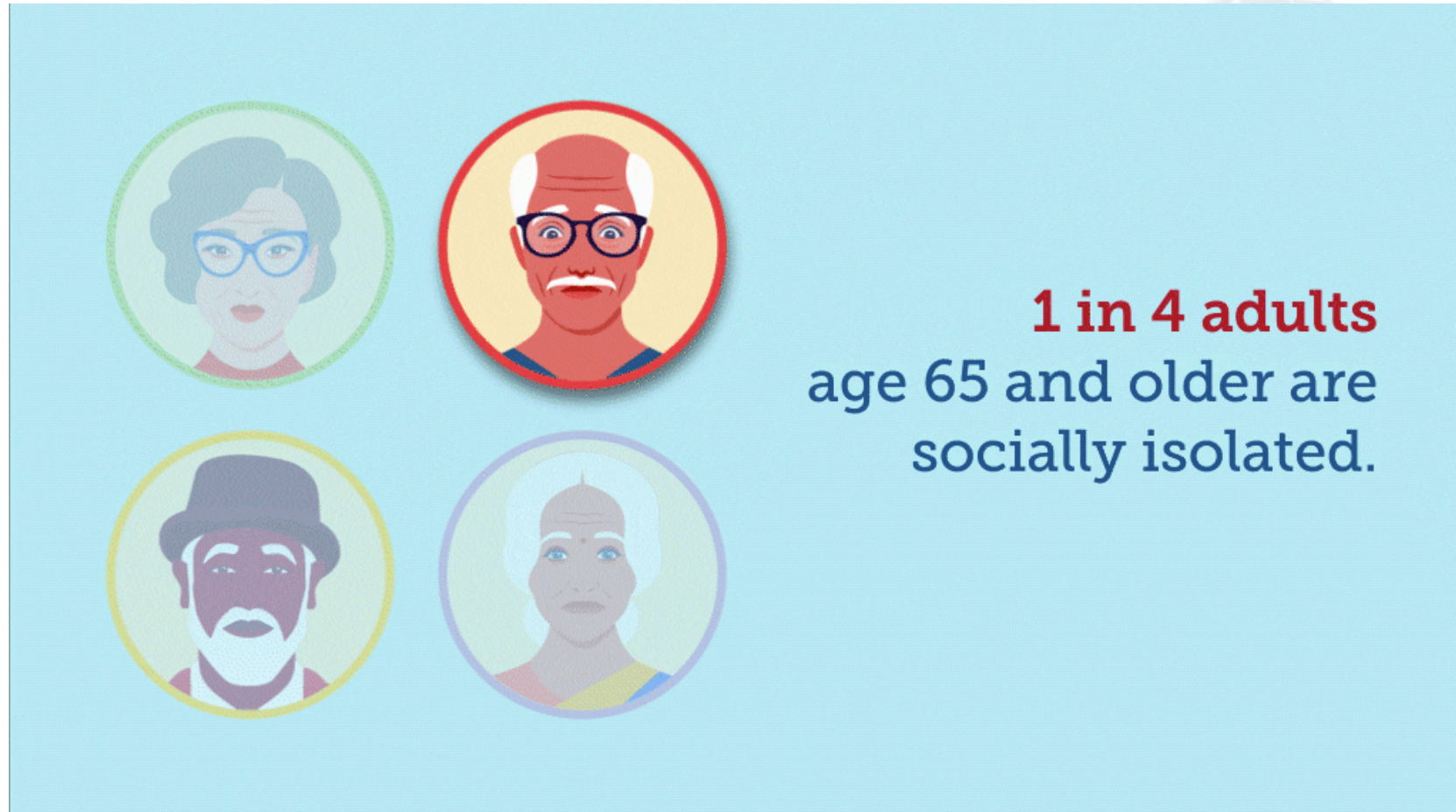
With permission from Louise Hawkey, PhD

# How many older adults are socially isolated?



National Health & Aging Trends Study

how daily life changes as we age



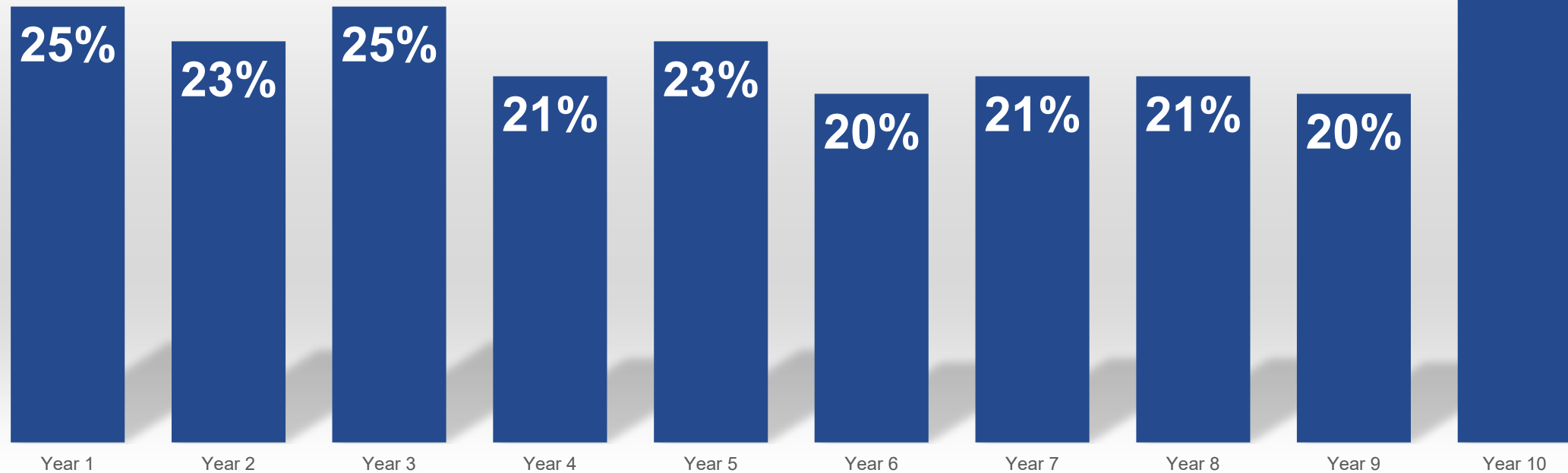
# Social Isolation changes



National Health &  
Aging Trends Study

how daily life changes as we age

## Prevalence of Social Isolation in the National Health and Aging Trends Study (2011-2020)

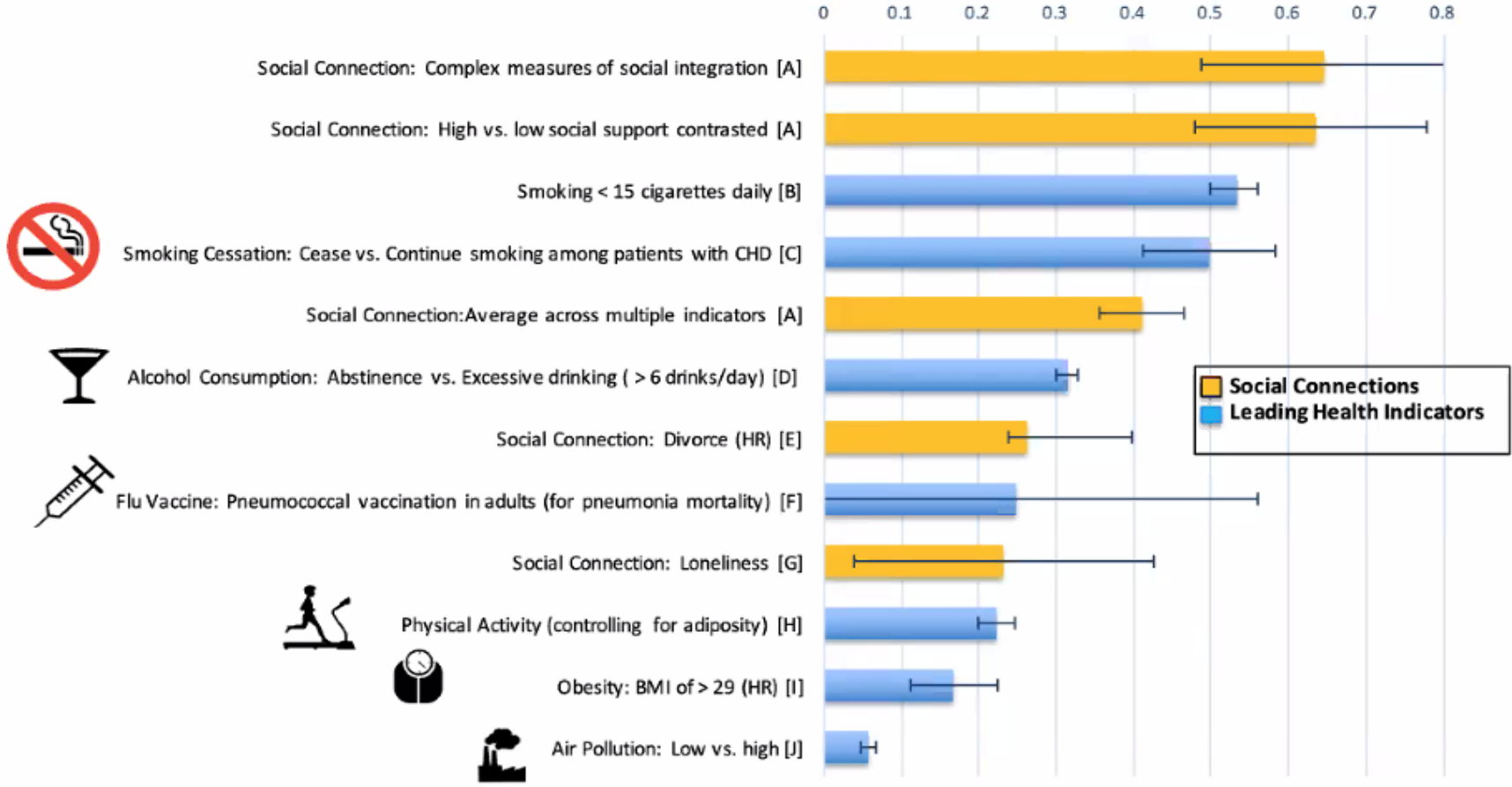


# Epidemiology of social isolation & loneliness in last years of life

- Data for Health and Retirement Study
  - Representative cohort (N=3,613)
- Measures of social isolation and loneliness
- Age >50 and older, interviews from last 4 years of life
- Found 1 in 4 were socially isolated or lonely in last 4 years of life



# Social Disconnection impact on premature mortality compared to other important factors

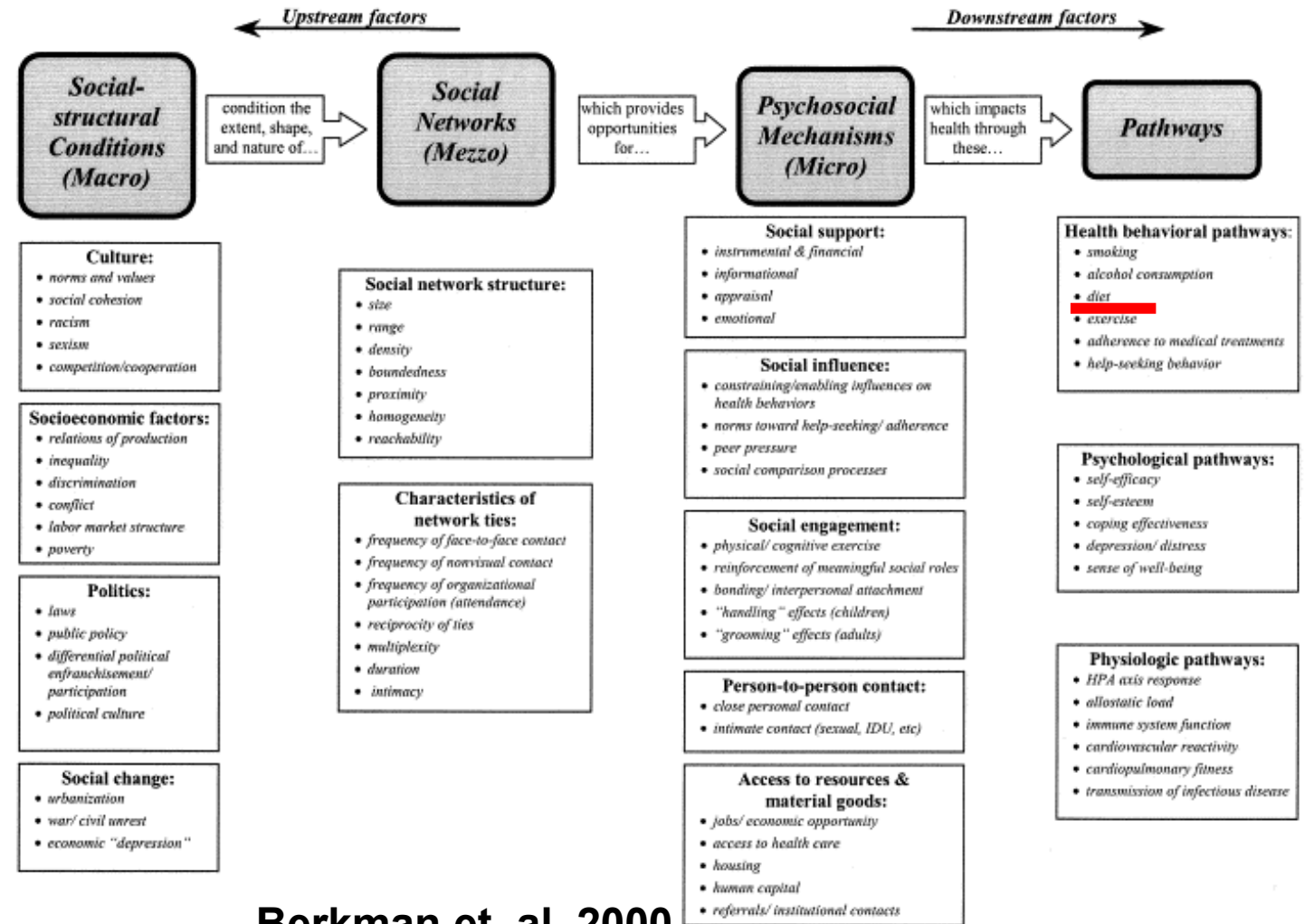
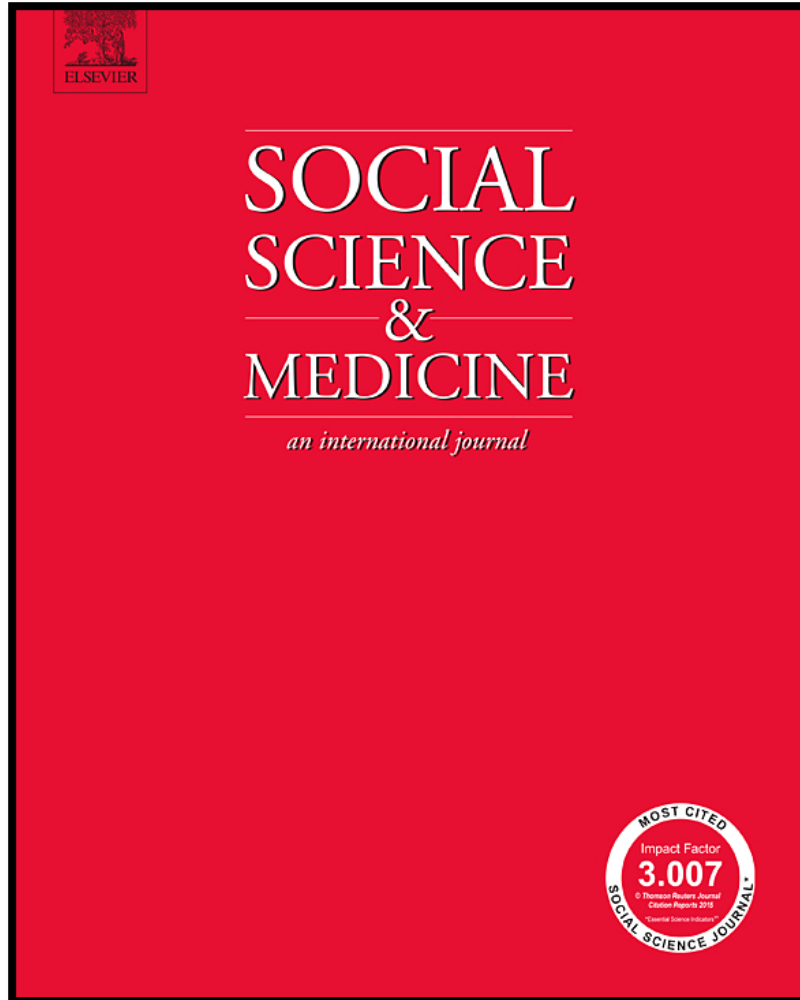


Holt-Lunstad J, et al, American Psychology 2017

# Decades of Research

From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium ☆

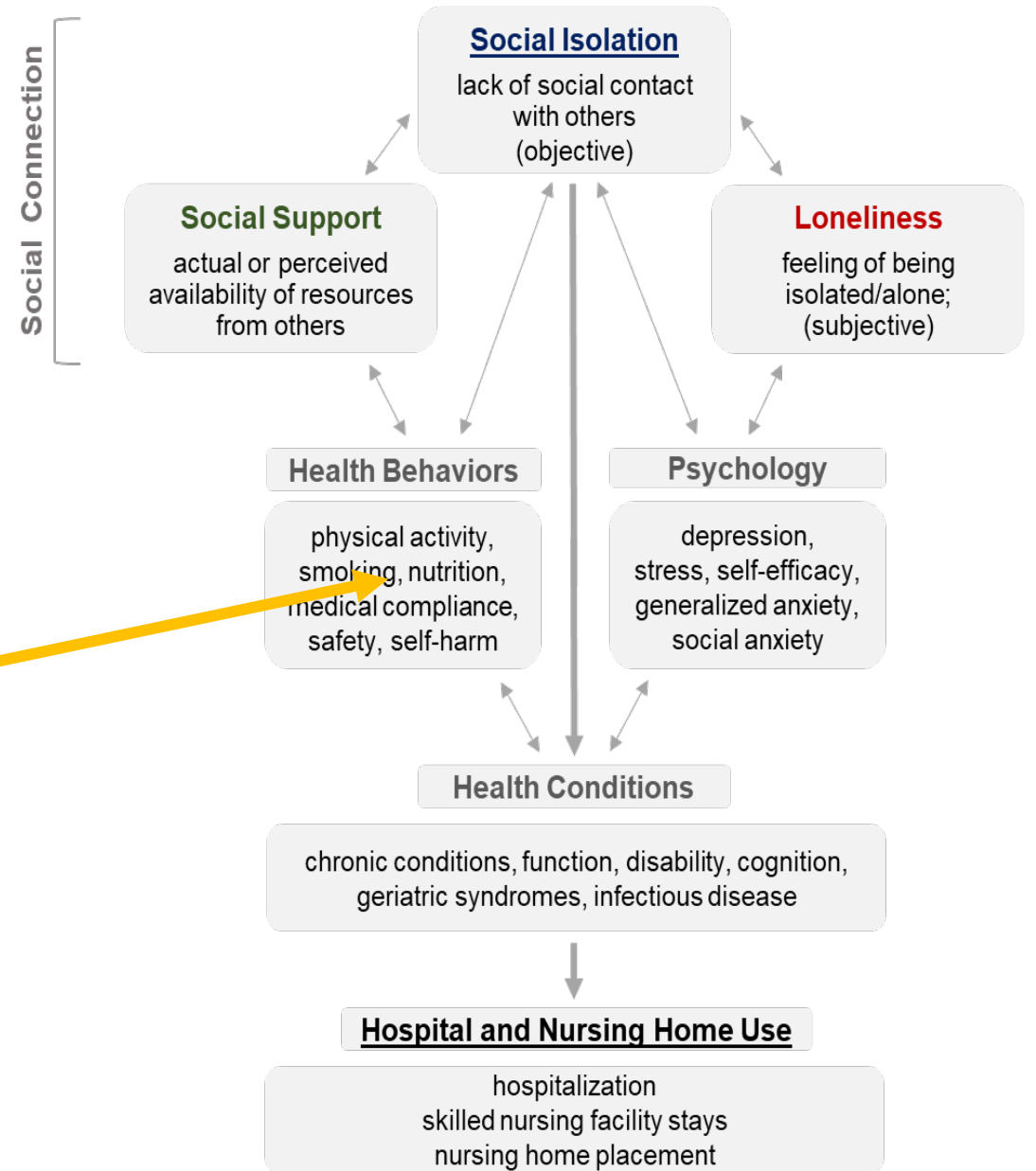
Lisa F. Berkman<sup>a,\*</sup>, Thomas Glass<sup>b</sup>, Ian Brissette<sup>c</sup>, Teresa E. Seeman<sup>d</sup>



Berkman et. al, 2000

# Conceptual Framework Modeling Pathways between Social Isolation and Healthcare Utilization

**Nutrition**



# Social Connection and Biology

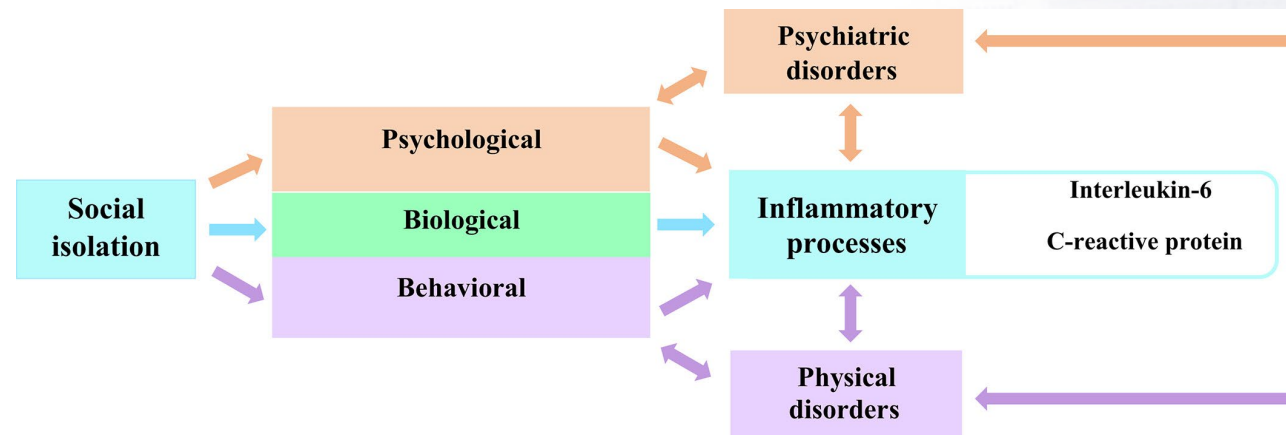
Received: 7 June 2021 | Revised: 13 September 2021 | Accepted: 1 October 2021  
DOI: 10.1111/jgs.17518

Journal of the  
American Geriatrics Society

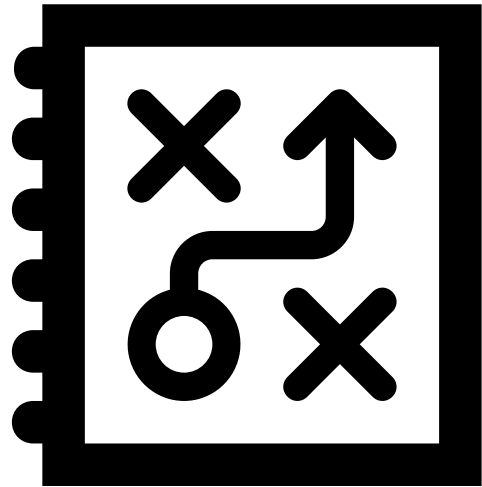
## Getting under the skin: Social isolation and biological markers in the National Health and Aging Trends Study

Thomas K. M. Cudjoe MD, MPH<sup>1</sup> | Sruthi Selvakumar MS<sup>1</sup> |  
Shang-En Chung ScM<sup>1</sup> | Carl A. Latkin PhD<sup>2</sup> | David L. Roth PhD<sup>1</sup> |  
Roland J. Thorpe Jr PhD<sup>2</sup> | Cynthia M. Boyd MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>

Community dwelling older adults who experienced social isolation had higher levels of inflammatory markers.



# Social Connection and Nutrition



**Pathway**



**Tool**

# Social Connection and Nutrition

- Food Assistance Programs: Congregate Meal Programs
- Meals on Wheels- *More than a Meal*
- COVID-19 Food boxes and delivery



# Social network type associated with nutrition risk

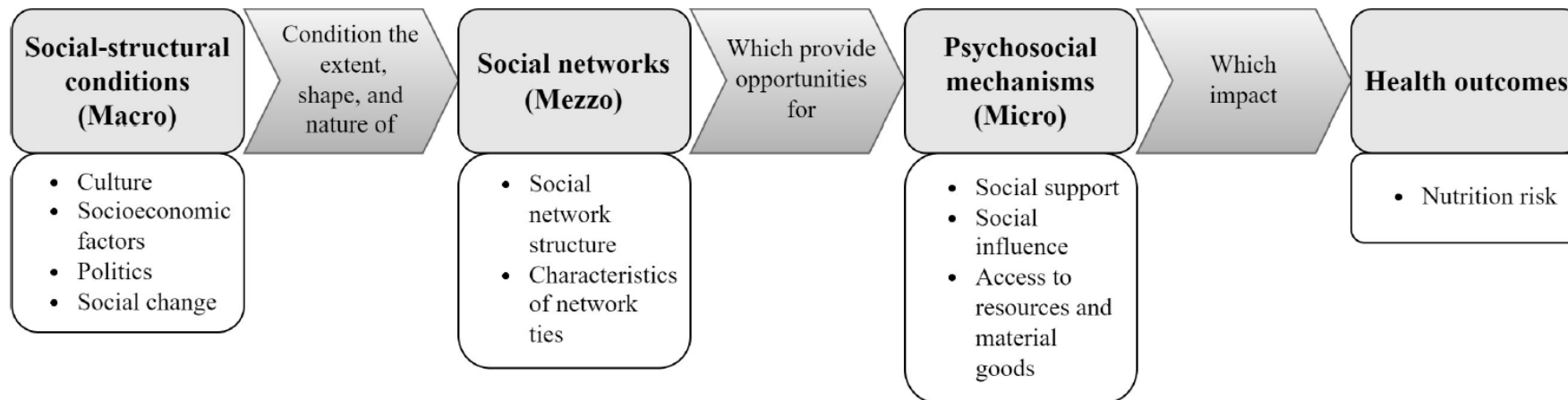
Open access

Original research

Family Medicine and  
Community Health

## Nutrition risk varies according to social network type: data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging

Christine Marie Mills <sup>1</sup>, Heather H Keller<sup>2,3</sup>, Vincent Gerard DePaul<sup>1,4</sup>, Catherine Donnelly<sup>1,4</sup>



- 17,000+
- Age 45+
- Measured Social Network- size, frequency of network contact, frequency of organizational participation
- SCREEN-8

Figure 1 Social network theory (adapted from Berkman *et al*<sup>13</sup>).

CONSENSUS STUDY REPORT

**Social Isolation  
and Loneliness  
in Older Adults**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

**Develop a More Robust Evidence Base**

**Translate Research into Healthcare Practice**

**Improve Awareness**

**Strengthen Education & Training**

**Optimize ties b/w Health Syst. & Community Networks/Resources**

**NASEM, 2020**

# Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation



2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the  
Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community



**Strengthen Social Infrastructure**

**Enact Pro-Connection Public Policies**

**Mobilize the Health Sector**

**Reform Digital Environments**

**Deepen Our Knowledge**

**Cultivate a Culture of Connection**

**US Surgeon General Advisory, 2023**

# Strategies to advance social connection

- Educate, Awareness, Response (EAR)
- Easy, Purposeful, Sustainable
- Start Proximal

# Challenges and Opportunities- Social Isolation and Loneliness

Expand **Awareness**

Improve **Measurement**

Investment in **Research**

**Intervention** Development

Don't forget **Equity**

Realize **Assets**

Thank you!

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