



Social Participation and Mental Health among Older Adults

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Message from the Guest Editors

Despite longevity being a long-term goal, population ageing is discussed mainly with a focus on the challenges. The needs of support and care of older persons are often presented as burdens to family members and welfare states. Additionally, dementia and memory illnesses are significant threats to everybody, and loneliness in old age is becoming increasingly common as older persons are often left marginalised in society.

To avoid marginalising older people, social participation is vital. It can be informal, meaning that older persons have the opportunity and resources to socialize with other people, families, friends, peers, or meet occasional acquaintances in a nearby café or park. Social participation can also be formal, such as being active in politics, non-governmental organisations, churches, or societies. Both types of social participation have the potential to increase positive feelings in the person, such as belonging, meaning of life and happiness. Positive feelings again promote psychological wellbeing and mental health in general.

