RELATIONSHIPS AND WELL-BEING IN LATER LIFE – PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF IP 212 - LONGITUDINAL SURVEY (WAVE 3)

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PROJECT AIMS
IP 212 aims at investigating the processes of overcoming vulnerability factors in close relationships of middle- and old-aged adults. Specifically, the project seeks to explore the various paths of psychological adaptation to divorce and bereavement, and to identify resources and possibilities of psychosocial prevention and intervention. On the other hand, we are interested in continuity and change of long-term marriages, and in the role of chronic stressors, such as health problems or caregiving strain, which are major challenges for marital quality.

WAVE 3
Data stem from wave 3 of the longitudinal survey-based study with three measurement points (2012, 2014, 2016), which are part of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES (funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation).

QUESTIONNAIRE
Table A: Demographics (e.g., gender, age)
Table B: Well-being and life conditions (psychological, social, physical)
Table C: Psychological resources (e.g., personality, generativity)
Table D: Current relationship (e.g., communication, marital strain)
Table E: Separation and divorce
Table F: Widowhood

VARIABLES / INSTRUMENTS
Well-being:
• Life Satisfaction: Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985)
• Emotional loneliness / social loneliness: De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scales (De Jong Gierveld & Kamphuis, 1985)
• Personality:
  • Extraversion, openness: BFI-10 (Rammstedt & John, 2007)
• Social resources:
  • Relationship satisfaction / relationship strain: self-developed items
  • Partnership communication (positive interaction/asymmetrical communication): Communication Patterns Questionnaire (Futris et al., 2010)
  • Dating interests: self-developed item

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS: COMPARISON AMONG MARITAL STATUS

1. Well-being
Figure 3. Emotional loneliness
Figure 4. Social loneliness
Figure 5. Life satisfaction

2. Personality
Figure 6: Personality and life satisfaction (Pearson correlations)

3. Interpersonal resources
Table 1. Social resources and well-being in long-term married persons (Pearson correlations)

FIRST CONCLUSIONS
• The large sample size and the variety of collected variables serve as a good basis for generalizable results concerning various paths of psychological adaptation to divorce and bereavement in middle and older age. The response rate of over 80% show the high commitment of participants of the longitudinal study.
• Our preliminary results suggest that especially the divorced group show more emotional and social loneliness and lower levels of life satisfaction than the long-term married group. Older widowed persons (age 62+) show the highest level of emotional loneliness in comparison to other marital status groups.
• Our findings suggest that personality and social resources are associated with loneliness, as well as with life satisfaction. This has important implications for understanding the various paths of psychological adaptation to divorce and widowhood.
• Finally, the findings provide important possibilities to identify resources and possibilities of psychological prevention and intervention.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (WAVE 1 & 2)

LIVES International Conference – Relationships in later life – Challenges and Opportunities Bern, June 28 – 29