

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 vulnerabilising 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).

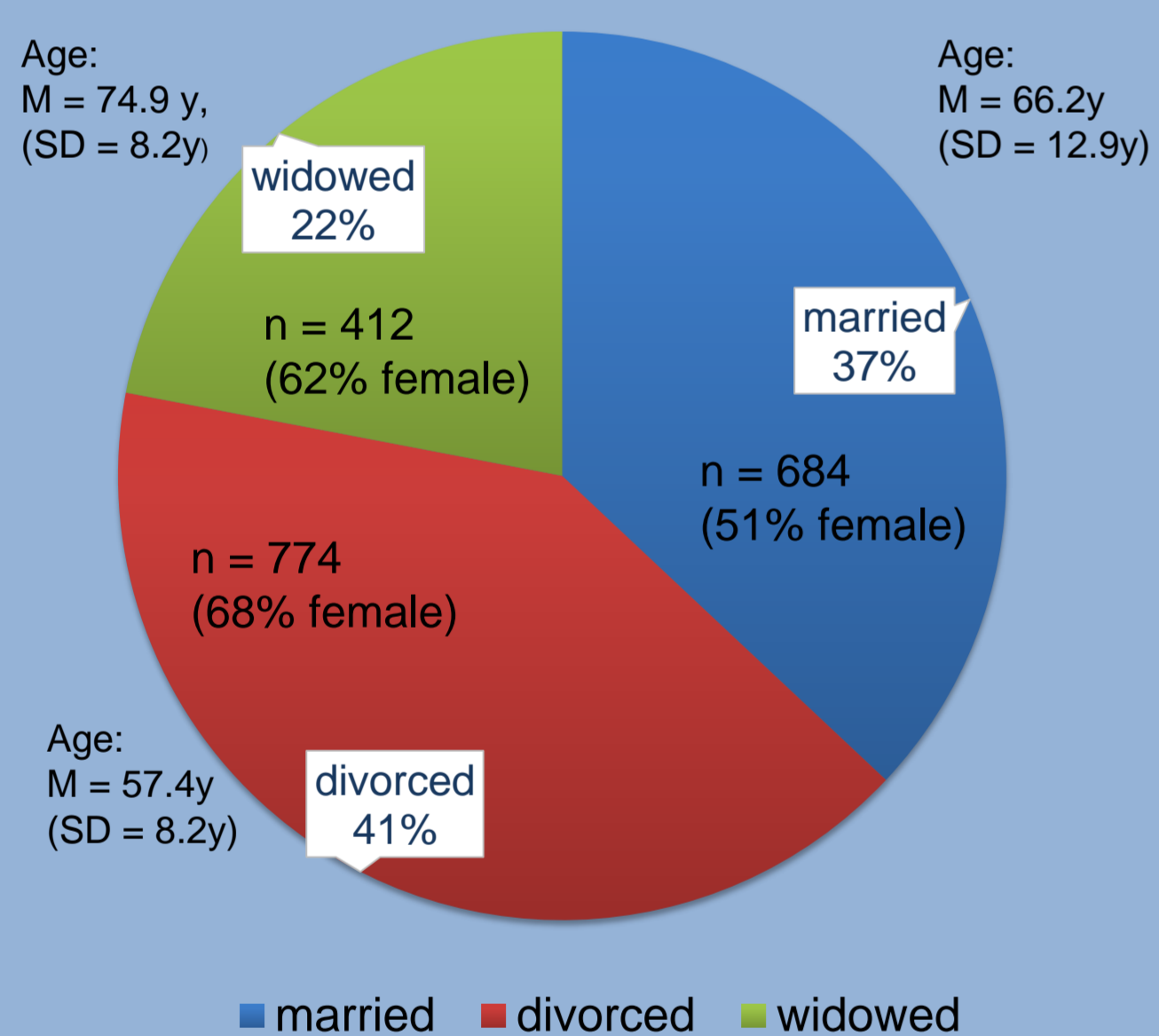


Figure 1. Sample at wave 3

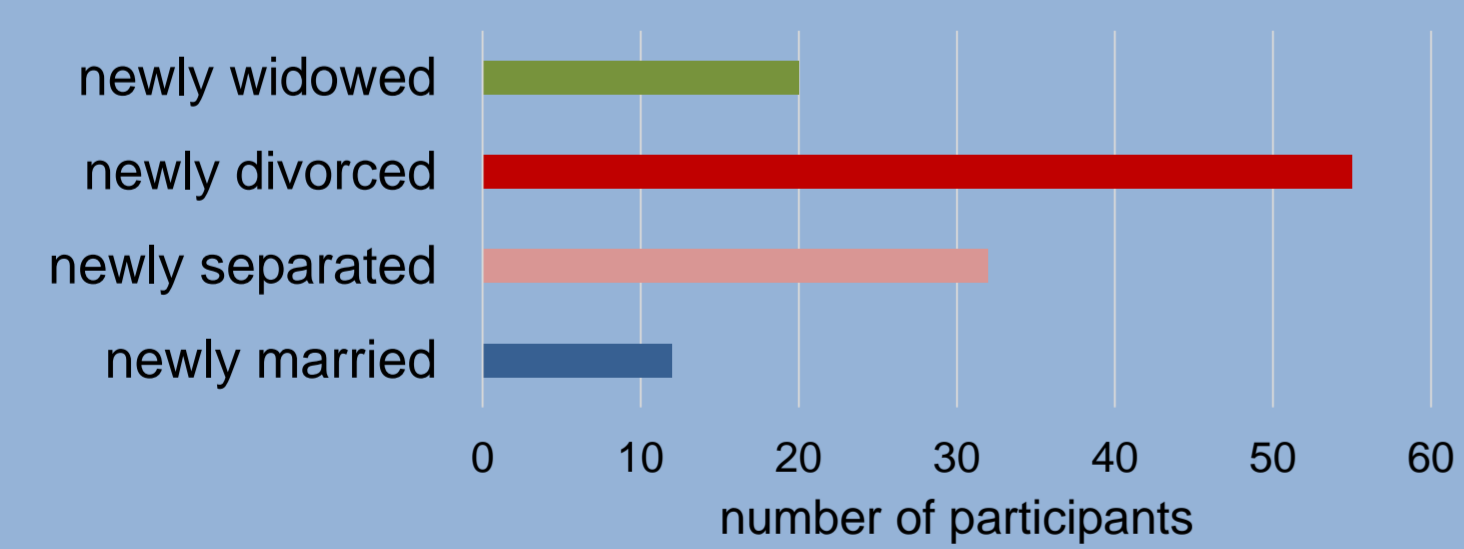


Figure 2. Change in marital status from 2014 – 2016 (6% of the sample)

QUESTIONNAIRE

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

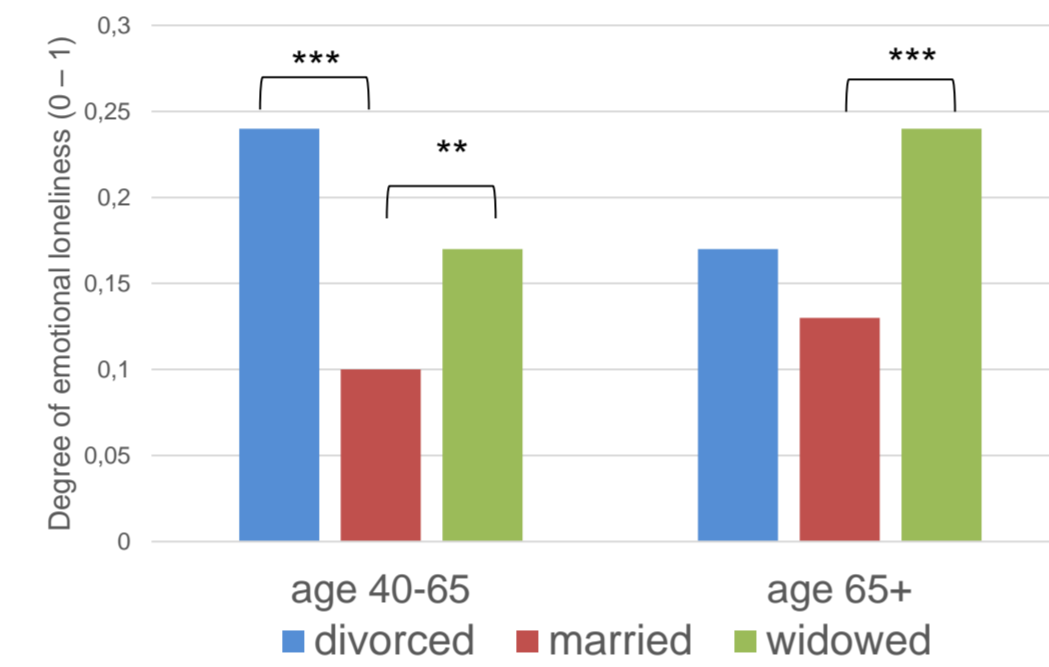


Figure 3. Emotional loneliness

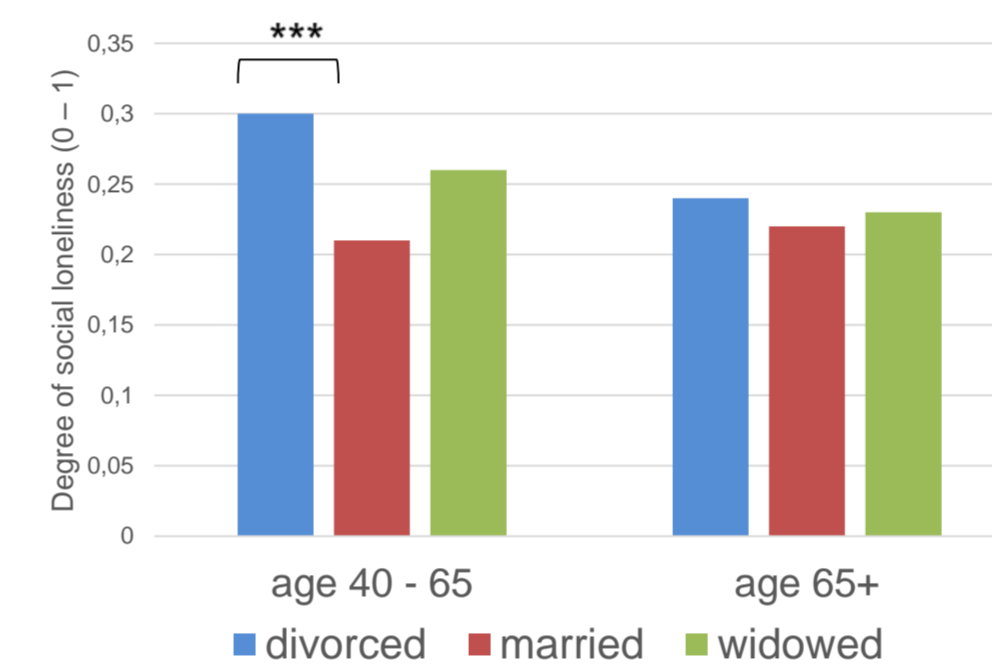


Figure 4. Social loneliness

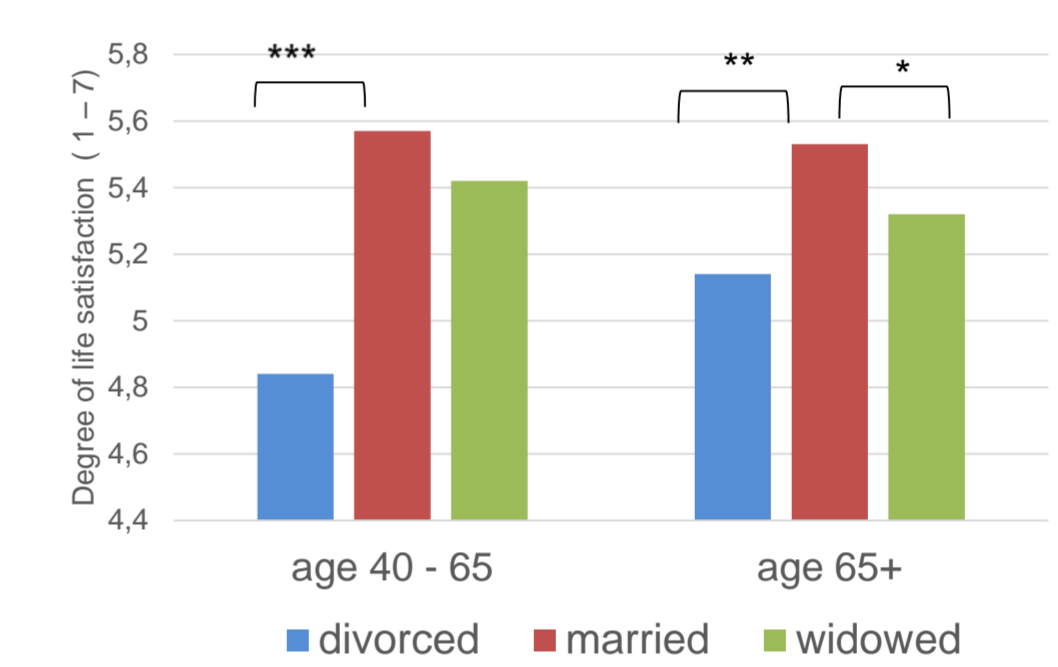


Figure 5. Life satisfaction

2. Personality

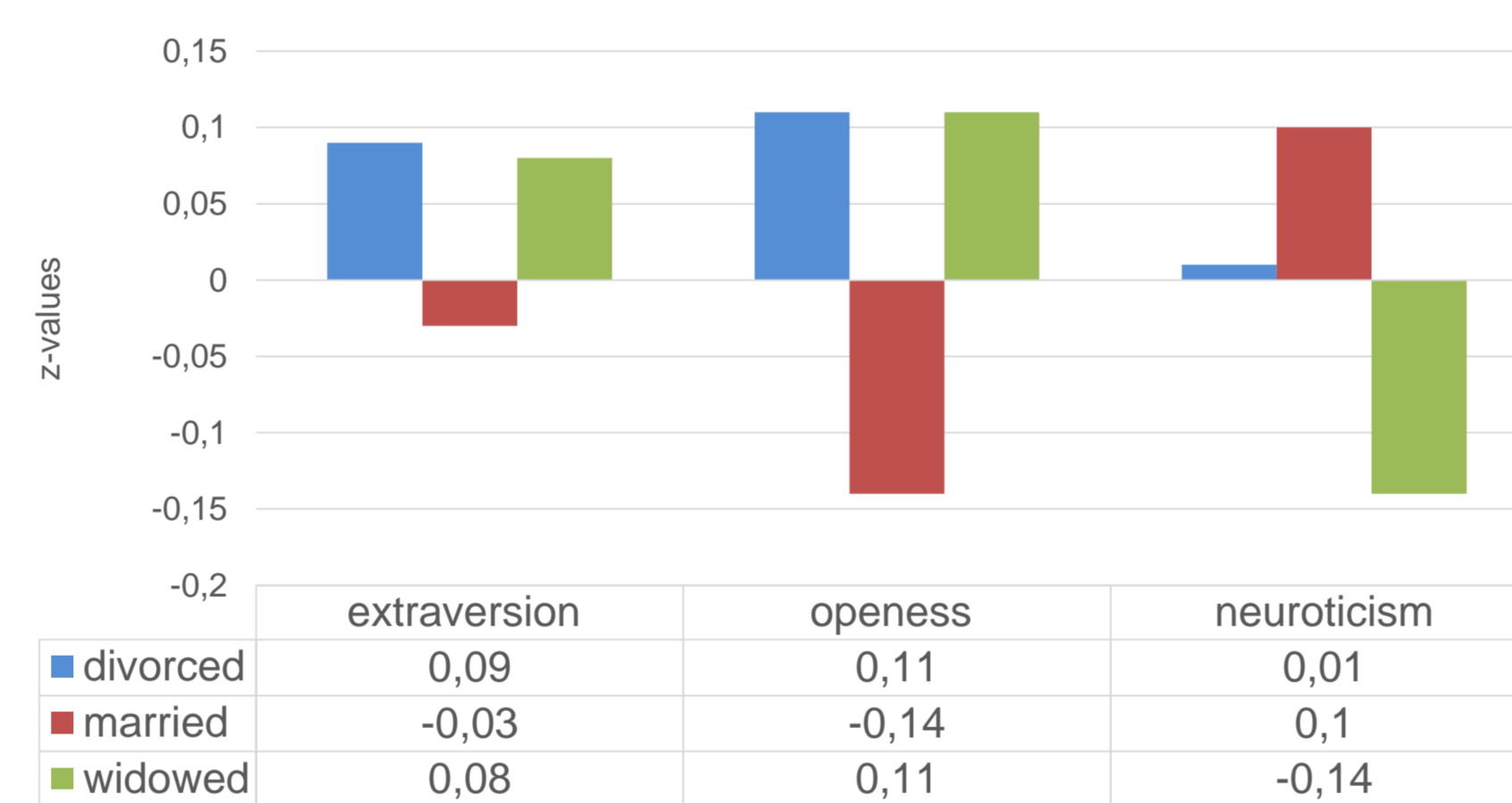


Figure 5. Personality and marital status (age 40 – 65 years)

Table 1. Personality and well-being (Pearson correlations)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Personality						
1. Openness	-					
2. Neuroticism	-.12**	-				
3. Extraversion	.28**	-.25**	-			
Well-being						
4. Emotional loneliness	-.16**	.30**	-.22**	-		
5. Social loneliness	-.16**	.22**	-.34**	.57**	-	
6. Life satisfaction	.14**	-.33**	.22**	-.60**	-.47**	-

3. Interpersonal resources

Table 2. Social resources and well-being in longterm married persons (Pearson correlations)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intrapersonal factors							
1. Partnership satisfaction	-						
2. Relationship strain	-.39**	-					
3. Positive interaction	.41**	-.29**	-				
4. Asymmetric communication	-.08**	.27**	-.32**	-			
Well-being							
5. Emotional loneliness	-.28**	.16**	-.18**	.07	-		
6. Social loneliness	-.25**	.12**	-.23**	.07	.42**	-	
7. Life satisfaction	.48**	-.26**	.29**	-.10*	-.41**	-.40**	-

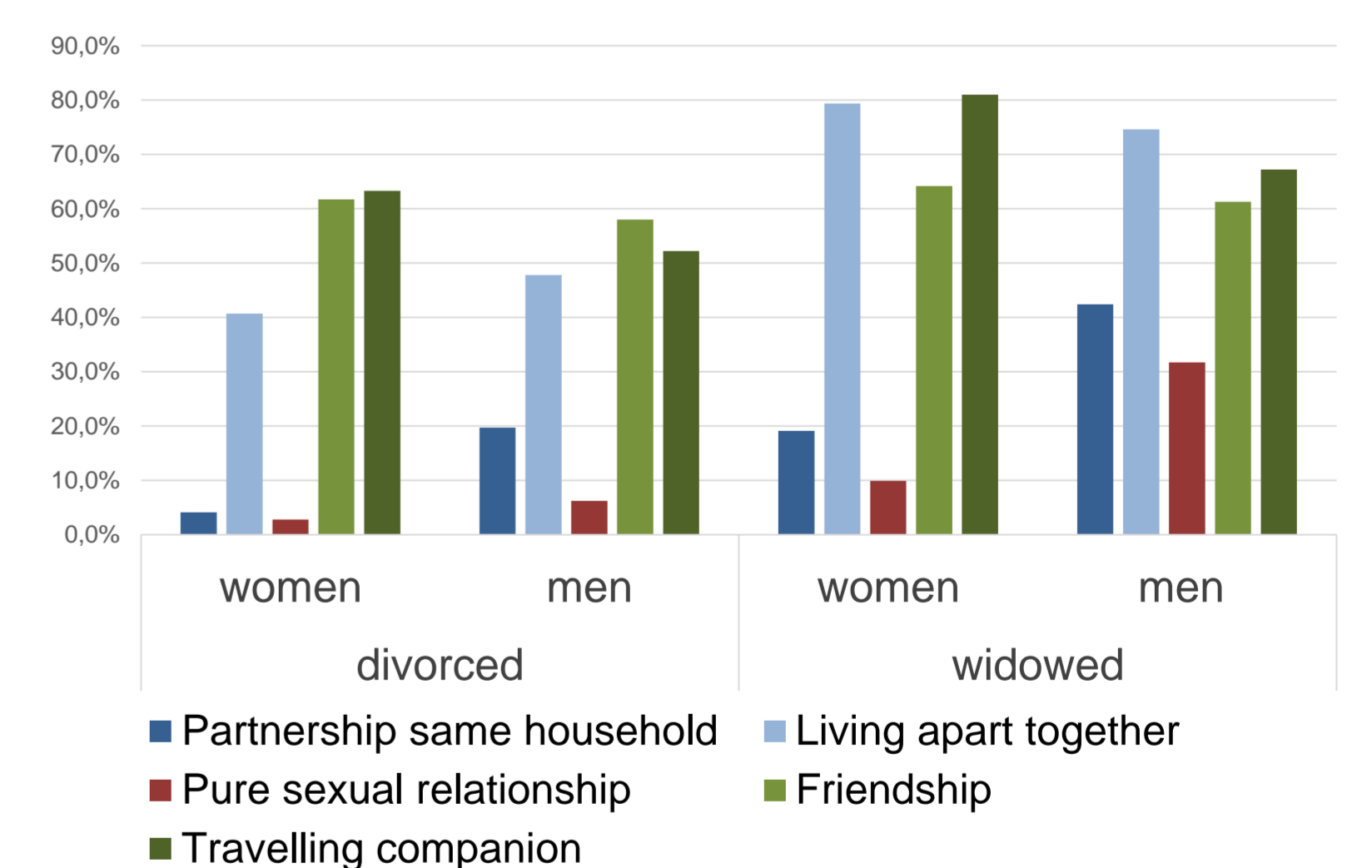


Figure 6. Single widowed and divorced persons: In what kind of partnership are they interested?

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.