

Advancing Long and Productive Lives



University of Utah

Catie Blaine, Jakie Deily, Becca Post, Hannah Zabka

Our Topic

Our topic centered around examining ways older adults can continue to feel productive after retirement

We choose to look at the benefits of continued work and volunteer in individuals over the age of 65

Why we choose this topic

All four of us have witnessed the changes that happen in individuals as they hit retirement age

We noticed that many individuals are looking to find additional purpose in life, we started to wonder how could they find this

We understand that as social workers this will be a problem that we will run into when working with older adults



Introduction

What we know:

The average age of retirement is steadily rising

The number of people who are 65 and older make up more of our population in America than any other group

People are living longer than they have ever before

When individuals retire they go through various changes in understanding who they are in the world

The need for social workers who are competent in working with older adults is on the rise

The Goal:

To understand the ways that social workers can help older adults manage the transition out of the work force

To understand the benefits of volunteering on physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being

To understand if continuing to work past the age of 65 promotes positive physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being

Descriptive Research Findings

Impacts of retirement

Lower standard of living

Social Security is expected to have a decline of approximately \$400 billion.

Financial planning

Quality of life

What research has shown

Health issues, cultural problems, & interpersonal relationships

Continued paid work and volunteering have been considered an important productive role.

Key dimensions of productive healthy aging

Less physical and cognitive decline, lower mortality rates

Reduced risk for developing various forms of dementia

Correlational Research Findings

Mental Health Benefits

Volunteering as an older adults provides a sense of life purpose and direction.

Increased levels of happiness and life satisfaction.

Reduced levels of stress.

Reduction in depression symptoms.



Correlational Research Findings Continued

Physical Health Benefits

Improved immune and cardiovascular systems.

Increased energy levels.

73% older volunteers compared to 62% non-volunteers.

Increased physical activity levels and lower BMI.

Increased chronic disease management.

81% older volunteers compared to 75% of non-volunteers.

Decrease in mortality rates compared to non-volunteers.

44% decrease in mortality.

Effectiveness Study Findings

Chronic Pain Patient to Peer

- Two Themes:
 - Making a Connection
 - Sense of Purpose

Benefits

- Decreased:
 - Pain
 - Depression
- Increased:
 - Self-Value/Worth
 - Confidence
 - Functioning

Productive & Social Engagement

- 84% reported their lives changing for the better
 - Making Connections
 - Increasing Skills
 - Starting new engagements:
 - Work, volunteer, educational, & community activities.

Most Influential Benefits

- Getting out of the house
- Having more structure in life

Social Change Agent as Advocates

Education, Environment, Neighborhood

A summary of what we found

The volunteering has a positive impact on physical, emotional, cognitive and social well-being

Specifically:

Decreases depression, dementia, and social-isolations

Promotes a positive sense of self and life purpose

Continued work promotes similar benefits with financial compensation

This allows for individuals to continue to maintain their current quality of life



Implications of Social Work

Having this understanding allows social workers to

Better be able to provide resources and options for
olders adults struggling to transition out of the
workforce

Have a dialogue with patients about the pros and
cons of volunteering

Of how to promote ways to stay active in older
adulthood



Future Research Considerations

- We were able to only find two studies that used interventions with individuals 65 and older to show the benefits of volunteering, future research should consider finding additional ways to and potentially evidence based practices that show the benefits of volunteering in older adults
- We would recommend that future research also examine more clearly the benefits of continuing to work in later adulthood



Thank you