

Workshop on Kinlessness and Living Alone at Older Ages *NIA's Opening Remarks*

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Background

- The proportion of people living alone and living without children has increased significantly over the past few decades, and yet individuals in this living arrangement are **rarely discussed in terms of broader research on their health and wellbeing.**
- Across different **countries**, the number of people living alone or who are kinless is driven by various macrosocial, policy, and contextual factors.
- To advance the study of kinlessness at older ages, this workshop brings together researchers investigating a **range of health and well-being outcomes**, to move beyond the existing research demonstrating that kinlessness or living alone is primarily associated with poor health.

Relevance to NIH/NIA Objectives

- NIA's Strategic Goal B of better understanding the effects of **personal, interpersonal, and societal factors on aging**, including the **mechanisms** through which these factors exert their effects.
- Focus on the way that **family structure**, in this case, living alone, is a mechanism associated with healthy aging.
- This workshop will complement BSR's work on capturing the increasing **diversity and complexity of family structures** and composition, such as the recent RFA on Measures and Methods for Research on Family Caregivers for People Living with AD/ADRD ([RFA-AG-23-022](#)), by drawing further attention to the “household of one.”



In alignment with recommendations & milestones

Recommendation(s) from 2019 Review of BSR by the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA):

- #1 - Improve understanding of health disparities in aging
- #2 - Study influences of macro-social trends on aging
- #5 - Support research to improve care for persons with dementia and caregivers

BSR AD/ADRD Area(s) of Emphasis:

AD/ADRD Health Disparities Research
Care Partner/Caregiver Research
Dementia Care

AD/ADRD Research Implementation Milestone(s):

- 13D - Support secondary analysis of data from population based and intervention studies with appropriate content related to informal and formal caregiving.
- 13K - Expand research leading to understanding of effectiveness and impacts of non-residential and residential care of PWD. Support research projects that identify community programs that can improve the lives of persons with dementia and their families; including home modifications and the support of Dementia Friendly Communities.
 - Relevant Success Criteria: Identify care models that are effective in diverse populations, including those who **live alone**. Diverse in SES, racial and ethnic composition and rural/urban settings.

Goals For Today's Workshop

- **Mechanisms:** This NASEM CPOP half-day workshop will explore the mechanisms by which **individuals end up living alone or are kinless, as well as the positive and negative health and well-being associated with this status.**
 - International perspectives & U.S. based
- **Discuss data gaps:** Panelists are encouraged to discuss research using longitudinal studies, cross-national comparisons of kinlessness or living alone, as well as comparisons to other living arrangements.
 - Focus on population-level questions and data sources (e.g., HRS, HRS International studies, NHATS) and culminate in a discussion of **data gaps and measurement needs.**
- **Discussion of other gaps:** Panelists are encouraged to identify **scientific gaps** that go beyond data or measurement.



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The background is a solid blue color. In the center, the letters "NIA" are written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below "NIA", the tagline "The Leader in Aging Research" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Surrounding the text are several circular images. Some contain portraits of diverse elderly individuals, including a woman with glasses, a man with a mustache, a woman in a headscarf, a couple, and a man with a turban. Other circles contain medical illustrations, such as a brain, a heart, a joint, and a blood vessel. Faint, light blue lines connect some of the circles, creating a network-like pattern.

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