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Project Title

The Elder Orphan in Canada: A Descriptive and Analytical Epidemiological Investigation of Health-Related Characteristics and Unmet Needs

Project Summary

Declining fertility and rises in divorce, childlessness, and family mobility are upending traditions of family-based elder care, heightening the prevalence of isolated and unsupported older adults known as elder orphans. Despite the significant vulnerability associated with elder orphanhood, including cognitive and functional impairment and risk of early institutionalization, this subset of the elderly population remains relatively unexamined within Canada. This project will seek to address this gap in research through an analysis of the CLSA to identify key sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of older Canadians at risk of elder orphanhood, the prevalence of unmet care needs among this population, and the relationships between their unmet needs and health status. This research will contribute to a neglected area of health research in seeking to identify this population's challenges in accessing needed services to facilitate the development of responsive strategies.

Keywords

Elder orphan, Health and social care utilization, Kinless elderly, Healthcare disparities, Social epidemiology