

Applicant

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Project Title

You've got e-mail: Online social networking to reduce depression and enhance health among older adults

Project Summary

Social isolation is common among older adults and better strategies are needed to overcome its negative consequences. Online social networking offers a creative solution to this problem, yet evidence for its effectiveness in alleviating loneliness and enhancing health and well-being is inconclusive. Moreover, many seniors feel overwhelmed by today's technologies, resulting in the absence of engagement with potential sources of social capital. The proposed research seeks to establish whether (and how) online social networking can support well-being among seniors, compared to more traditional interpersonal forms of social interaction. Indeed, despite the known benefits of social relationships for well-being, many seniors' reduced opportunities for face-to-face interactions may make online social engagement particularly valuable. Using the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, we will examine the relationships between these forms of social participation and reduced social isolation and depression, alongside increased life satisfaction and health through enhanced perceptions of social support and engagement.

Keywords

Social isolation, online social networking, depression, life satisfaction, health