

Special Issue

Epidemiology and Mental Health among Older Adults

Message from the Guest Editors

The proportion of adults aged 60 years and older in the population is expanding worldwide, and is expected to nearly double by 2050. With this expansion comes a growing need for public health research focused on improving and maintaining health and quality of life among older adults. There is growing recognition of the unique challenges to optimal mental health faced by older adults. Nearly 20% of older adults experience some type of mental health concern, most commonly but not limited to neurological disorders, depression, and substance abuse. Older adults with mental health disorders are at greater risk of functional and physical decline, disability, early mortality, and numerous other poor health outcomes. Moreover, poor mental health may adversely affect the course and treatment of other chronic mental and physical health conditions, leading to increased healthcare use and expenditures. These effects are compounded by the under-identification and under-treatment of mental health problems among older adults.

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Addressing the environmental and public health challenges requires engagement and collaboration among clinicians and public health researchers. Scientific discoveries and advances in this research field play a critical role in providing a rational basis for informed decision-making toward control and prevention of human diseases, especially the illnesses that are induced from environmental exposure to health hazards.

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