

Abstract

This was a two-year longitudinal study about the moderating effect of marital status (widowed or married) on social network and the psychological well-being of elderly people in Hong Kong. A total of 200 Chinese men and women, aged from 28 -91 years, were recruited for participation. The studied social network characteristics were the social support (emotional support, instrumental support and negative social exchange) provided by nuclear and extended families and friends. Psychological well-being was measured by morale, happiness and loneliness. Results revealed that widowed people had worse psychological well-being by the end of the study period. They received less emotional support from their nuclear families. They were less happy and had lower morale due to the negative social exchange from families. And surprisingly, the more instrumental support they received from their friends made them lonelier and have lower morale. The direction of future studies had also been discussed in this paper.