

# Association between the lifestyle of living-alone seniors and the sense of loneliness

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## [SYNOPSIS]

In recent years, with the rapid growth in the number of living-alone seniors, measures need to be taken to reduce loneliness, which is known as one of the major causes of premature death and various diseases.

This research focuses on the social contact in urban spaces as a possible protective factor against the development of loneliness. We conducted a questionnaire survey focusing on going-out activities, especially those for leisure purposes, which previous studies have suggested might be correlated with loneliness, and examined their association with it. The major findings of this study are as follows:

(1) The outing frequency is negatively correlated with loneliness. Especially those who have a high frequency of “going out for necessary social contact” or “going out for leisure” tend to have particularly lower levels of loneliness.

(2) Gender, the presence of children, age, and subjective health showed significant associations with loneliness. As such, loneliness tends to be higher among males, people without children, people in their 60s (rather than those in their 70s), and people who are aware of their physical frailty.

(3) Regarding the detail purpose of “going out for leisure,” people with a low level of loneliness were more likely to recall their experiences while “going out to interact with others.” Such a tendency was not seen in people exhibiting a high loneliness level.

(4) Regarding the urban environment that promotes “going out for leisure,” people with a low loneliness level tend to prefer an “urban environment for going out with friends,” while those feeling a high degree of loneliness tend to favor an “urban environment with good natural landscapes.”

Through this research, it was clarified that it is important for the senior citizens to go out in urban spaces, enjoy leisure time, and interact with others so that they can avoid feeling lonely.