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During the COVID-19 pandemic, stigmatization of older persons has increased in traditional and social media. It was unknown whether this negative messaging could be detrimental to the mental health of older individuals, and whether the relatively uncommon positive messaging about older individuals could benefit their mental health. To address these gaps, we designed age-stereotype interventions based on actual news stories that appeared during the pandemic. As expected, the exposure of older individuals to the negative-age-stereotype-messaging interventions led to significantly worse mental health (more anxiety and less peacefulness), compared to a neutral condition; in contrast, the positive-age-stereotype-messaging interventions led to significantly better mental health (less anxiety and more peacefulness), compared to a neutral condition. The results demonstrate the need for media messaging aimed at empowering older individuals during the pandemic and beyond.

SUBJECTIVE AGE CHANGES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Aging is associated with an increased risk of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality. In this study, we tested whether the pandemic influenced how old individuals felt by examining longitudinal within-person changes in subjective age. We tested two alternative hypotheses: (a) people felt increasingly older in response to the stress generated by COVID-19; (b) people felt increasingly younger due to psychological distancing from older age. We tested these hypotheses in a large US sample of adults assessed once before and twice during the COVID-19 pandemic. Multilevel analyses indicated that people reported feeling younger with the emergence of COVID-19. We further tested demographic, health, and psychosocial predictors of changes in subjective age. Overall, the findings supported the hypothesis that subjective age partly reflects a coping process of psychological distancing from older age, a process that parallels physical and social distancing.

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE AGE AND WORRY FOR OLDER ADULTS IN TIMES OF A PANDEMIC

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Given the role of age as a risk factor in the covid pandemic, we examined the longitudinal cross-lagged relationship between subjective age and Covid-related worry, and possible moderators of this relationship. Data were obtained at two-time points (June and October 2020) by a phone/online survey, from N = 611 older participants (Mage = 69.92 years). Participants felt on average 10 and 8.5 years younger than their chronological ages at the

two-time points, respectively. Younger subjective age at T1 increased the level of worry at T2 irrespective of age, perceived control and subjective health. Higher worry increased subjective age at T2, but only for those with worse subjective health. Our results show that subjective age and Covid-related worry interact over time. This relation needs to be explored further in order to understand the relationship between subjective age and well-being especially, but not only in the pandemic context.

Session 4635 (Symposium)

HEALTH AND AGING DISPARITIES AMONG LATIN AMERICAN OLDER ADULTS: FINDINGS FROM STUDIES IN BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, AND MEXICO

Chair: Margarita Osuna

Aging in Latin America is occurring rapidly, in a context of high levels of poverty and inequality. This symposium is focused on population health and the health-disparities found in some of Latin America's largest middle-income countries, Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia. This symposium contains presentations on different health-related issues affecting older adults, which can have further implications for wellbeing, health, and disease risk. The papers in this symposium examine a variety of health-related dimensions and disparities among older Latinos that include physiological functioning, cognition, and oral health. Using the Mexican Health and Aging Study (MHAS), Sheehan investigates the associations between personal and familial educational attainment on sleep quality. Also using MHAS, Milani. Using data from the Brazilian Longitudinal Study of Aging, Farina examines the relationship between race and cognition. Garcia uses data from the Colombian Survey of Health, Well-Being, and Aging to study the relationship between Motor Cognitive Risk Syndrome (MCRS) and cognition and frailty. Using the same dataset, Osuna examines variation in oral health in Colombian older adults and the impact this has on their wellbeing. Results indicate which population subgroups in Latin American have increased risk for poorer health and which dimensions of health have gender, race and socioeconomic disparities. The findings highlight the importance of understanding the conditions under which Latin American older adults are aging and the implications this can have in the future.

ORAL HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE IN COLOMBIAN OLDER ADULTS

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Despite its importance for health and wellbeing, oral health quality of life (OHQoL) has received little attention in lower-income countries, such as Colombia. This study describes the prevalence of older adults' OHQoL and variability by socioeconomic status. We use data from the 2015 SABE-Colombia (N=18,700), a nationally representative survey of community-dwelling Colombians ages 60