Investigating psychological wellbeing (flourishing) with community dwelling older adults with multimorbidity - identifying strength based interventions

Susan Waterworth,1 Deborah Raphael,1 Bruce Arroll,1 Jagpal Benipal,2 Aaron Jarden,3 Merryn Gott, 1

1Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland, New Zealand
2 Auckland and Waitemata District Health Board, New Zealand
3 South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, Adelaide.
North Shore, Auckland, North Island, Waitemata DHB

Annual growth in population 2.3%

Population: 582,765 in 2015/16

65+ population: will increase from 13% in 2014 to 20% in 2034, doubling in number to 148,980.

Third least-deprived DHB in NZ

Life expectancy: 85.1 years overall (highest in the country), 2.4 years higher than the NZ average.

Mortality: leading causes of mortality: Cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases
Objectives

• 1. Engage community dwelling older adults in exploring psychological wellbeing (flourishing).

• 2. Identify health promoting interventions and resources (assets) that enhance psychological wellbeing (flourishing).
Conceptual framework
Positive emotion
Engagement
Relationships
Meaningfulness
Accomplishment
Participants

- 31 individual interviews
- 18 women and 13 men.
- 10 women were widows, 4 were married and 4 divorced
- Women ranged from 66-85 with a mean age of 76 years
- 11 men were married and 2 were widowers
- Men ranged from 71-95 with a mean age of 75 years
- Long term conditions 0-5 with a mean range of 2. Medical diagnoses ignores the grumbling/frustrating issues
Positive people?

- General tendencies toward feeling contentment and joy (Kern 2014).

- Strategies or practices that they used to promote a positive way of thinking.

- “There is no point in sitting around and feeling sorry for yourself”. (M.87)

- “I love spending, it doesn’t matter if it’s food, clothes. But I can only spend if I’ve got it.” (F. 79)
Engagement

• Absorbed, interested and involved.
• Activities - Self orientated
• Collectivist
• A sense of meaning and purpose
Relationships

• Being with people in relationship

• “I’ve got different sectors of friends.” (F.79)

• Support other people

• Gain support from other people

• Preventing loneliness and isolation
Meaningfulness

• Having a purpose, a sense of worth.

• Volunteering, helping others.
• “If you can help somebody no matter in how miniscule a way, you feel that you’ve done something worthwhile.” (F.79).

• Future thinking
• “Most of us know that eventually at some stage we’re going to pass on, it’s not a taboo subject, we just make a joke of it. These villages are usually nicknamed the undertaker’s holding pens.” (M.87)
Accomplishments/Achievements

• How often do you achieve the important goals you have set for yourself? (PERMA-Profiler (Butler and Kern 2016).

• “I don’t think I’ve ever really set goals except when I was in real estate” (F.85)

• “I do feel responsible for friends, just keeping in touch.” (F.72)
Summary

Using PERMA we identified the strength based strategies/practices that our participants were using to enhance their psychological wellbeing (flourishing).

These fit with the positive-activity model.

Feedback to participants will enable us to develop local community models and identify the critical success factors at a local level.

Thank You

Questions?