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Prevalence of lonelinesses

Chronic loneliness is associated with a 26% increase in mortality which is equivalent to the risk of physical inactivity.¹ The most lonely were adolescents (12-17 years) with a 9.2% prevalence in South East Asia, compared to 14.4% in the Eastern Mediterranean. The next highest group was the elderly.

Northern European prevalence:

- 2.9% for young adults (18-29)
- 2.7% for middle-aged (30-59)
- 5.2% for older adults (≥ 60 yrs)

Eastern European prevalence:

- 7.5% for young adults (18-29 yrs)
- 9.6% for middle-aged (30-59)
- 21.3 % for older adults (≥ 60 yrs)

The author's caution: different ways of obtaining this information from single questions to multi-item questionnaires but avoiding issues of transient loneliness.

An accompanying editorial suggests "a public health approach means confronting loneliness factors across the life course, including poverty, education, transport, inequalities, and housing".²

References:

1. The prevalence of loneliness across 113 countries: systematic review and meta-analysis. BMJ (2022) [View here](#)
2. We need a public health approach to loneliness. BMJ (2022) [View here](#)

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