WHAT PREDICTS SATISFACTION WITH LIFE: A STRUCTURAL MODEL FOR A CROSS-NATIONAL SAMPLE OF OLDER ADULTS

S. Von Humboldt[1], I. Leal[1]

[1]Research Unit in Psychology and Health R&D, ISPA-Instituto Universitário, Lisbon, Portugal

Objectives: This study aims at exploring a structural model of satisfaction with life's (SWL) predictors in a cross-national sample of older adults.

Methods: A community-dwelling sample of 1,234 older adults was assessed regarding SWL, sense of coherence (SOC) and socio-demographic, lifestyle and health-related characteristics. Structural equation modeling was used to investigate a structural model of the self-reported SWL, comprising SOC, socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, education, marital and professional status, household, adult children, income, living setting and religion), lifestyle and health-related characteristics (physical activity, recent disease and medication).

Results: Significant predictors are SOC (β = .733; p < .001), religion (β = .725; p < .001), income (β = .551; p < .001), adult children (β = .546; p < .001), education (β = -.403; p < .001), living setting (β = -.292; p < .001) and medication (β = -. 197; p < .001). The variables accounted for 24.8% of the variability of SWL. Moreover, differences between the four nationality groups ($F_{(3, 671)}$ = 3.671, p = .066) were not found concerning SWL.

Conclusions: Sense of coherence is the strongest predictor of self-reported SWL. Other predictors are religion, income, adult children, education, living setting and medication. The four nationalities did not present significant differences, concerning SWL. This study highlights the factors that influence older adults' SWL, namely, SOC, religion and income, as promoters of aging well, within a salutogenic model of health for older populations.

Keywords: Satisfaction with life; predictors; structural equation modeling; older adults; sense of coherence.