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# Perspectives on Cohabitation and Care Partnerships in the Context of Low Socioeconomic Status

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## INTRODUCTION

- More older adults are living in multigenerational households. Cohabitation is often a result of adult children needing to provide caregiving due to the declining health of their older parent.<sup>1,2</sup>
- There is a higher incidence of older adults cohabitating with adult children among those of few financial means.
- Financial strain can negatively impact health and can be an added stressor in a living situation. Lower SES groups experience greater amounts of stressful life events, compared to those with more financial resources.<sup>2</sup>
- Resilience is defined as positive adaptation in the context of adversity, and is greatly influenced by the family and surrounding environment.<sup>3</sup>

## RESEARCH AIM

**To explore professional perspectives on experiences of low SES families who are living together and in care partnerships.**

## METHODS

- Qualitative Descriptive Design
- Purposeful sampling
- Semi-structured interviews of three social workers and one occupational therapist
- Analysis: Descriptive Coding<sup>4</sup>
- Resilience Framework
- Peer and Investigator Triangulation of Data

## RESULTS

### Financial challenges affect the health of everyone in a shared home

*"It can affect people's wellbeing in a trickle-down effect"*

### Living together can benefit all members of the home

*"When you're living with not very much money, it helps when you can pool it all together"*

### Past experiences of adversity may contribute to greater acceptance of cohabitation and roles in care partnerships

*"Don't worry... I know how to do this"*

## DISCUSSION

- Those of low SES experience increased adversity and vulnerability factors due to financial strain.
- Cohabitation and care partnerships can provide many protective factors to those of low SES.
- Adverse life experiences can foster a greater sense of acceptance of cohabitation and care partnerships.
- How individuals respond to these vulnerability factors and protective factors depends on their use of adaptive resources within and outside the person. Resilience emerges as individuals and families adapt to adversities, and can be argued as a goal of aging.<sup>3</sup>

## IMPLICATIONS FOR OS/OT

- Living arrangements influence overall well-being.
- Those of low SES who are cohabitating and in care partnerships have unique challenges and strengths.
- Further research: interventions to foster resilience

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Easthope, H., Liu, E., Judd, B., & Burnley, I. (2015). Feeling at home in a multigenerational household: The importance of control. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 32(2), 151-170.
- <sup>2</sup>Henning-Smith, C. (2016). Quality of life and psychological distress among older adults: The role of living arrangements. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 35(1), 39-61.
- <sup>3</sup>Harris, P. B. (2008). Another wrinkle in the debate about successful aging: The undervalued concept of resilience and the lived experience of dementia. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 67(1), 43-61.
- <sup>4</sup>Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.