



Over 65 Years Old: A Vulnerable Population Faces Social Isolation and Loneliness

Our rate is higher than that in Maine, the state with the largest number of people aged 65 or older. It is even higher than in Florida, the second state with the most significant amount of elderly adults at 21.3%. Many of these elderly adults live alone, and many of them have children living outside Puerto Rico, making them vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness.

In the First Symposium on Social Isolation and Loneliness, Triple-S CEO Roberto García pointed out that the Census showed that Puerto Rico lost 11.8% of its population between 2010 and 2020. This included many young adults and newly formed families from all over Puerto Rico. This meant that many elderly adults stayed behind in the island. García also stated that, "in 2021, we were the third country with the greatest demographic decline. Thanks to this emigration wave, a great deal of the social fabric of our communities has unraveled."

Living alone can lead to social isolation and may even prompt feelings of loneliness. The danger is that, in addition to all the emotional consequences these factors can have, scientific studies show that social isolation and loneliness cause damage to our physical health. Social isolation is associated with a 29% increase in premature death, increased cardiovascular health risks, increased likeliness of stroke, and risk for dementia, among others.

It is important to address loneliness and foster interpersonal social relations, looking after those we know that belong to this generation. Engaging in these activities with others helps strengthen the immune system and reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Conclusions from scientific studies show that social connections help reduce the risk of dementia and increase life expectancy.

Socializing is healthy.
