

Background

- Self-rated health (SRH) is positively associated with mental health among older persons in the community.
- Older inmates, i.e., those age ≥ 50 years, have a high prevalence of chronic conditions and considerable mental health needs.
- According to Erik Erikson's theory of aging, perceived worth and meaning in life may contribute to well-being (integrity versus despair) in the later stages of life.

Study Aims

1. Determine if SRH is associated with older inmates' mental health (depression and anxiety)
2. Evaluate perceived worth and meaningfulness in life as mediators of the SRH – depression and SRH – anxiety relationships

Methods

Study Sample

- The study sample (males; N=222; age = 56.2 (6.0); 38% white; education = 12.1 (2.3) years) was derived from the Aging Inmates Suicidal Ideation and Depression Study (Aging INSIDE).
- Participants were sentenced prisoners from 8 prisons in Connecticut.

Measures

- Depression – Assessed using the PHQ-9 (range 0 to 27)
- Anxiety – Assessed using the GAD-7 (range 1 to 21)
- SRH (score 1 - 5: Poor, Fair, Good, Very good, Excellent)
- Perceived worth – Assessed using the Loss of Personal and Social Worth subscale of the Geriatric Suicidal Ideation Scale (GSIS; range 7 to 33)
- Meaningfulness in life – Assessed using the Perceived Meaning in Life subscale of the GSIS (range 8 to 38)

Analyses

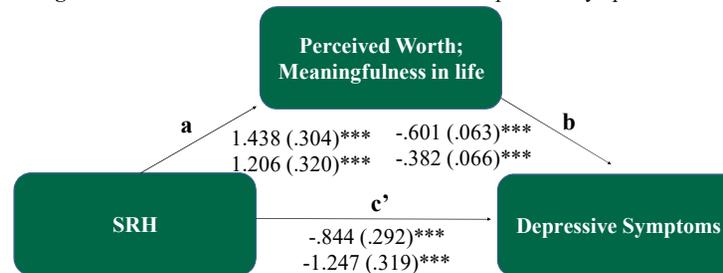
- Linear regression was used to evaluate the association between SRH and the mental health outcomes.
- Mediation analyses were used to investigate perceived worth and meaningfulness in life as mediators in the SRH – mental health relationships.

Results

Variable	Depression Model		Anxiety Model	
	β (SE)	<i>p</i>	β (SE)	<i>p</i>
SRH	-1.69 (.33)	< .001	-1.35 (0.33)	< .001
Age	-.08 (.07)	.20	-.16 (.06)	.02
Current mental health treatment	.80 (.83)	.34	1.76 (.82)	.03
Visitors	-1.64 (.80)	.04	-1.57 (.79)	.05
Variance %	21%		18%	

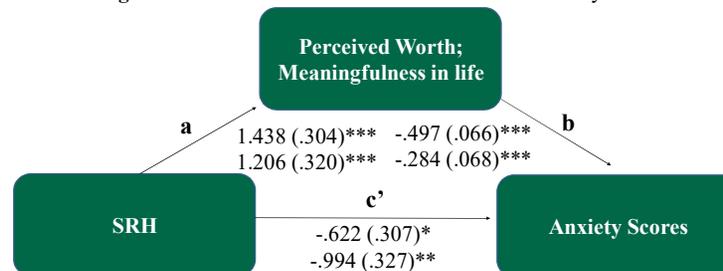
Note. The *p*-value of .05 was used to indicate significance.

Figure 1. Mediation Model with the Outcome of Depressive Symptoms Score



Indirect Effects (a x b): **-.864 (.213)** (-1.316 - -.477); **-.461 (.168)** (-.819 - -.174)

Figure 2. Mediation Model with the Outcome of Anxiety Score



Indirect Effects (a x b): **-.714 (.174)** (-1.078 - -.393); **-.342 (.142)** (-.651 - -.099)

Discussion

Aim 1

- Our findings of significant relationships between SRH and depression and anxiety are consistent with previous literature among the general population and among older inmates with mental health identified as a factor associated with SRH.

Aim 2

- Previous literature has yet to discuss how perceived worth and meaningfulness in life are a part of the pathway in the relationship between SRH and mental health.
- This study contributes knowledge regarding perceived worth and meaningfulness in life as two underlying mechanisms in the SRH – depression and SRH – anxiety relationships.

Conclusions & Implications

- Higher SRH ratings are both directly and indirectly associated with lower depression and anxiety scores in older inmates.
- Perceived worth and meaningfulness in life may help to explain the association between SRH and mental health in older inmates.
- In prison, where resources are limited, SRH assessments may offer simple means of identifying older inmates who may be more likely to be depressed or anxious.
- Interventions, such as the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, that help to build perceived worth and meaning in life among those aging in place in the correctional system may help to offset the negative relationship between SRH and mental health.

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References

Supplementary Table 1. Descriptive Statistics	
Variable	M (SD) or %
Age	56.2 (6.0)
Race (% White)	38%
Race (% Black)	42%
Years of education	12.1 (2.3)
# incarcerations (>3 times)	41%
Yrs. In prison for current offense	13.1 (9.5)
# chronic conditions	2.1 (1.1)
Social support	24.1 (8.8)
Visitors (% yes)	61%
Current mental health treatment (% yes)	27%
SRH	2.9 (1.1)
Depressive Symptoms score	6.2 (5.8)
Anxiety score	6.4 (5.6)
Perceived Worth	18.2 (5.2)
Meaningfulness in Life	14.8 (5.5)

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