

Cognitive Decline among Older Europeans with Limited Family Ties: A Cross-national Study of Networks & Investment



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- ✓ Older adults with limited family ties face greater risk of cognitive decline.
- ✓ Friendship networks and greater public investment in health, social, and long-term care may buffer that risk.

INTRODUCTION	METHODS	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS
- Europe's aging population faces a growing challenge of cognitive decline. - Declining fertility and partnership have increased the number of older adults with limited family ties. - Limited family ties may increase vulnerability by reducing opportunities for social support/engagement. - Friendship networks and public investment may help buffer cognitive decline. Objective: Examine whether social network characteristics and public investment buffer cognitive decline among older Europeans with limited family.	Data - SHARE; 2015, 2022: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe - OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - N=15,687 (65+; 15 countries) Measures - Outcome: 7-year cog. decline - Family: unpartnered, childless - Networks: Friendship, contact, closeness, satisfaction - Investment: Pensions, long-term care, health & social work Analysis - Multilevel linear regression - Country random intercepts - Cross-level interaction models	1. GREATER COGNITIVE DECLINE FOR KINLESS OLDER ADULTS Predicted 7-year cognitive decline (change in composite score, 2015–2022) (Higher values = more decline) 2. FRIENDSHIP TIES ARE ESPECIALLY PROTECTIVE FOR KINLESS OLDER ADULTS Association between friendship ties and 7-year cognitive decline 3. PUBLIC INVESTMENT MAY BUFFER COGNITIVE DECLINE Cross-level interaction: Public investment × Friendship ties for kinless adults	Friendship ties appear especially protective against cognitive decline for older adults with limited family ties. Greater investment in long-term care and the health and social care workforce may further support healthy cognitive aging across countries. CONTACT christine_mair@umbc.edu smudrazi@uw.edu National Institute on Aging (1P30AG097132) Result image generated with ChatGPT. ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION AAIC 26