

# Loneliness, quality of life and health inequalities

**Dr. Panayotes Demakakos**

*University College London*

# An outline of this presentation

- Description of loneliness
- Description of the associations of loneliness with health, life satisfaction and quality of life
- Multivariate analysis of loneliness as an outcome
- Multivariate analysis of health, life satisfaction and quality of life using loneliness as a predictor

# Loneliness: the measure

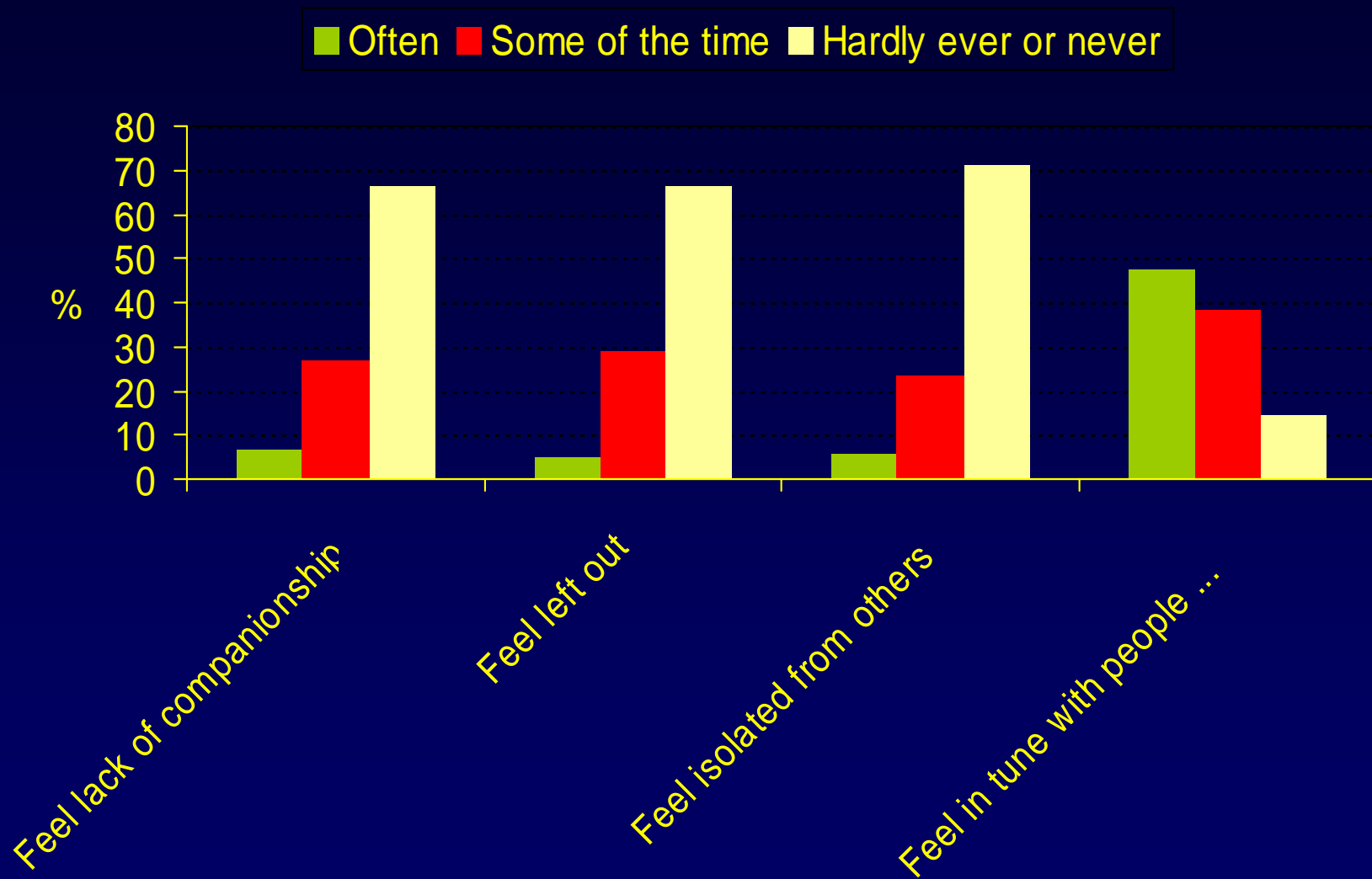
Four selected items from the UCLA-revised loneliness scale contained in the self-completion questionnaire of ELSA:

**8** The next questions are about how you feel about different aspects of your life. For each one, please say how often you feel that way.

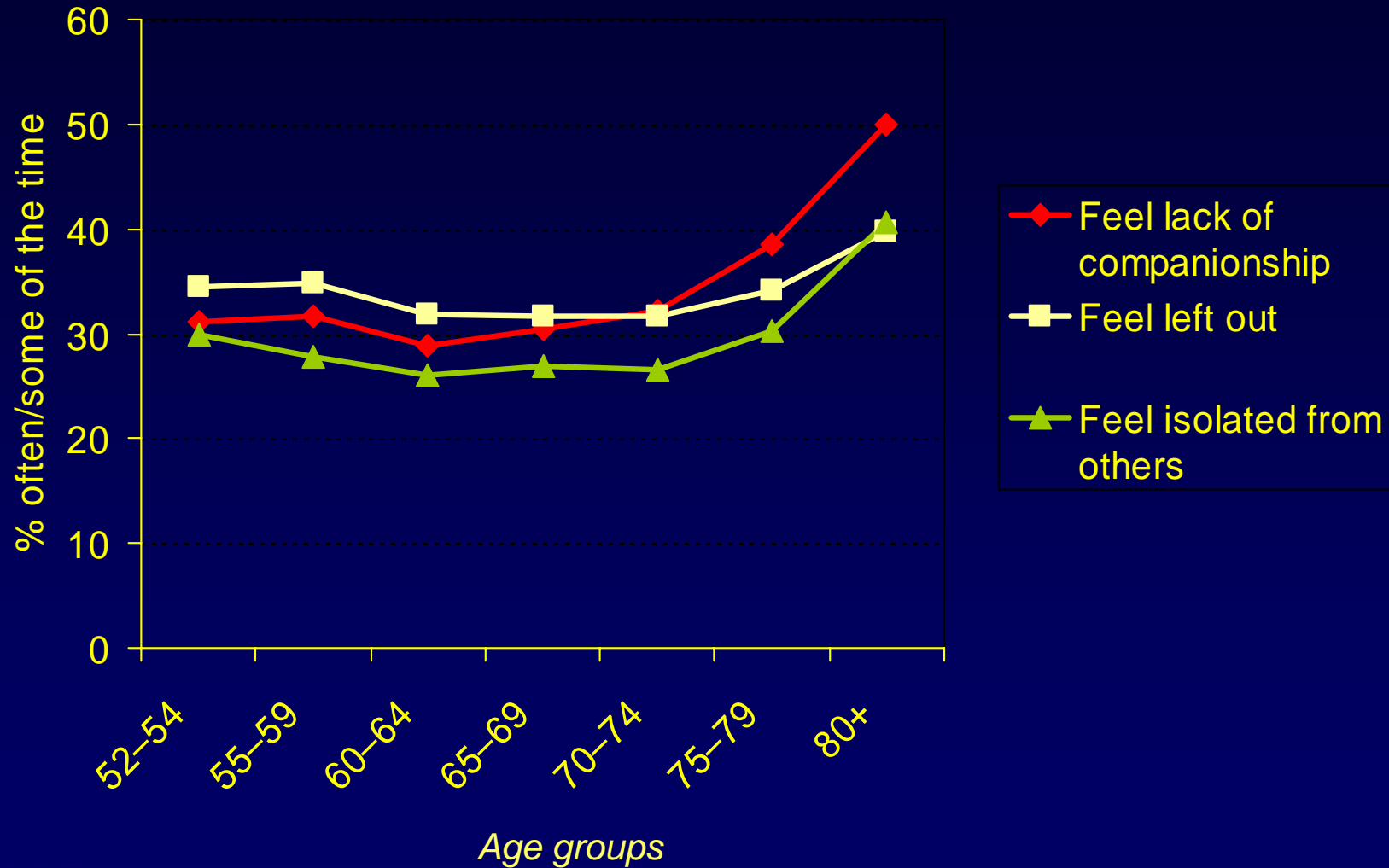
*Tick one box on each line*

	Hardly ever or never	Some of the time	Often	
How often do you feel you lack companionship?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	89
How often do you feel left out?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	90
How often do you feel isolated from others?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	91
How often do you feel in tune with the people around you?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	92

# Loneliness in ELSA wave2 at a glance

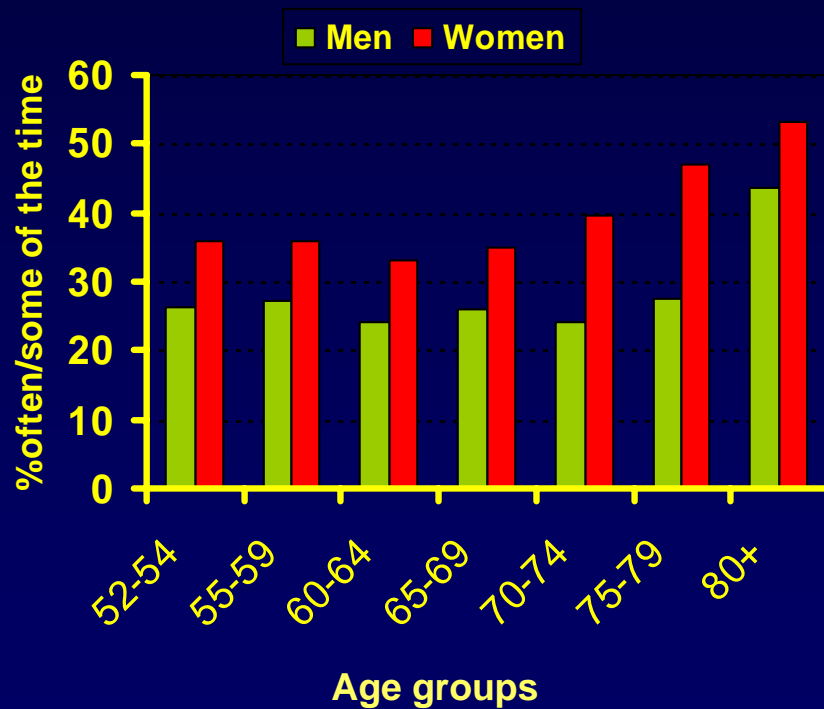


# Loneliness by age

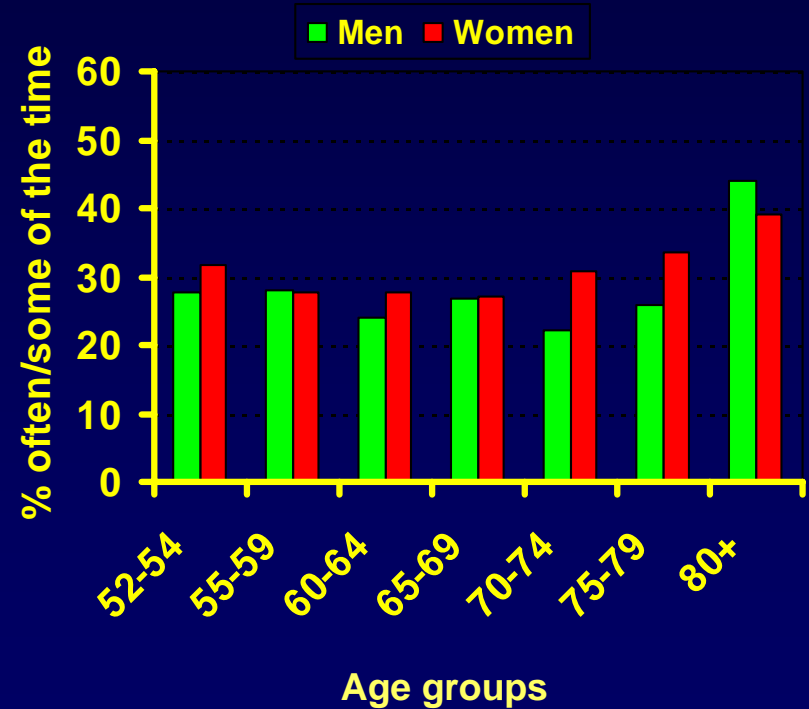


# Loneliness by age and sex

## "Feel lack companionship" by age and sex



## "Feel isolated from others" by age and sex

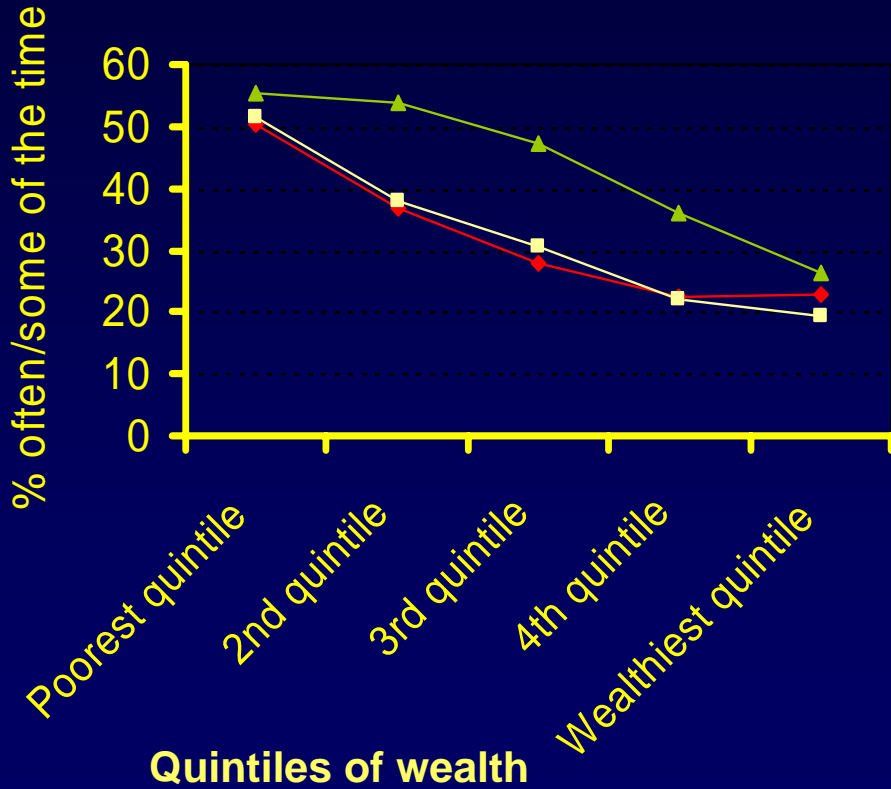


# Loneliness by wealth

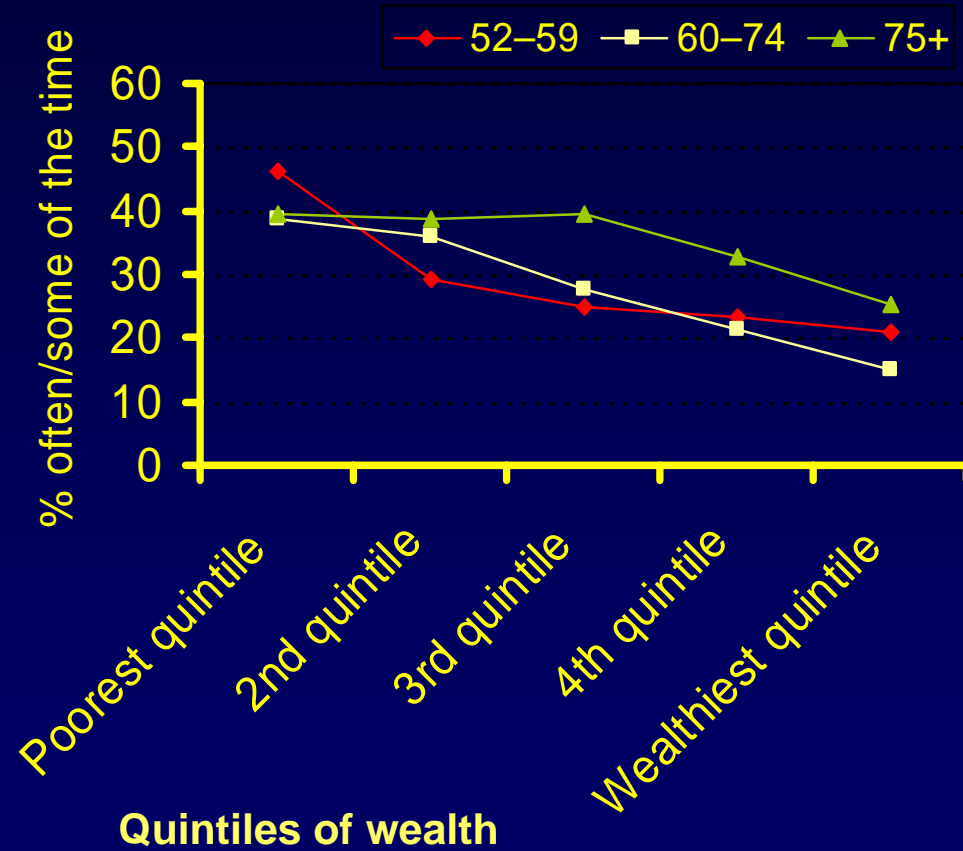


# Loneliness by wealth and age

## "Feel lack companionship" by age and total wealth

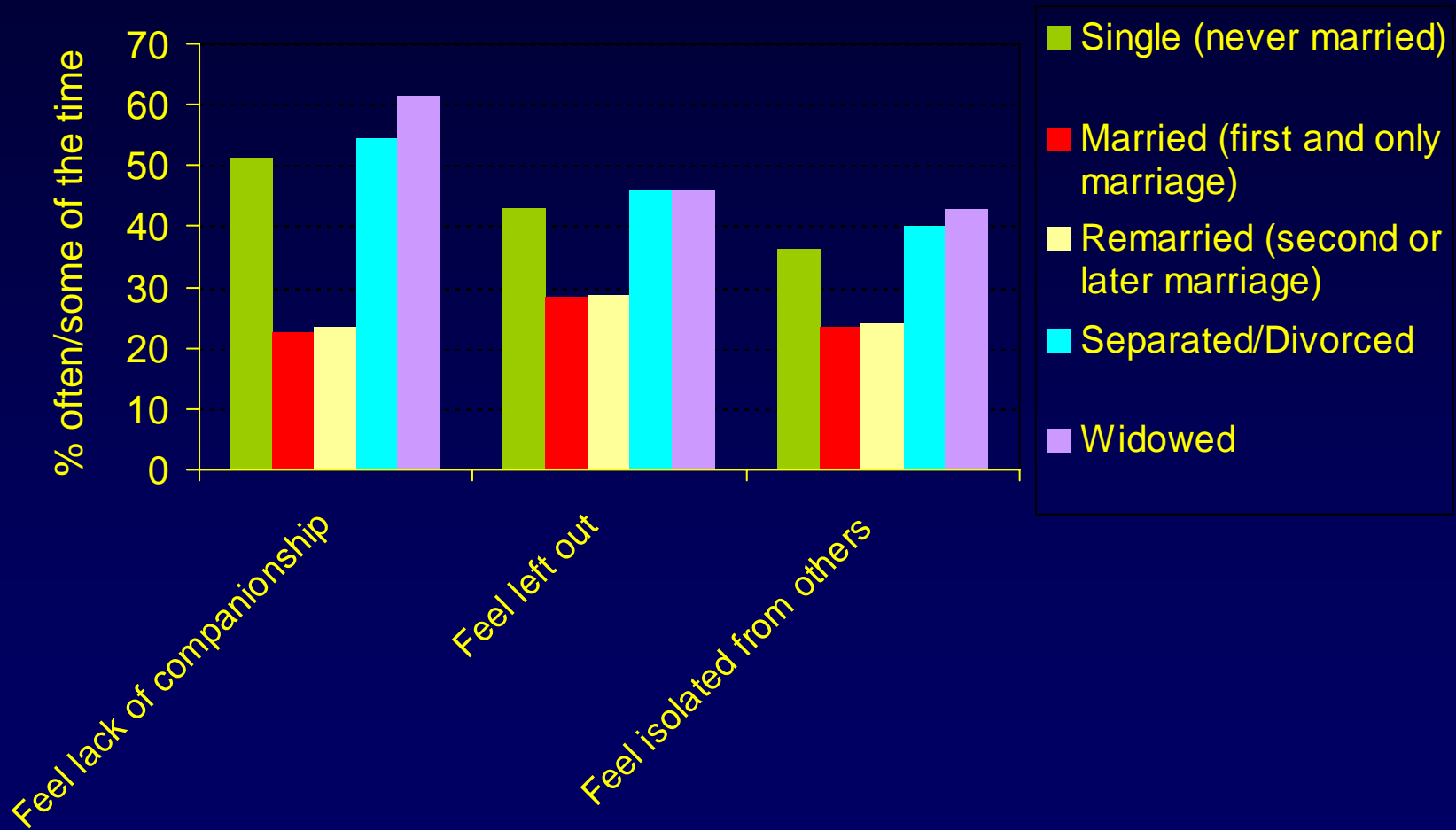


## "Feel isolated from others" by age and total wealth

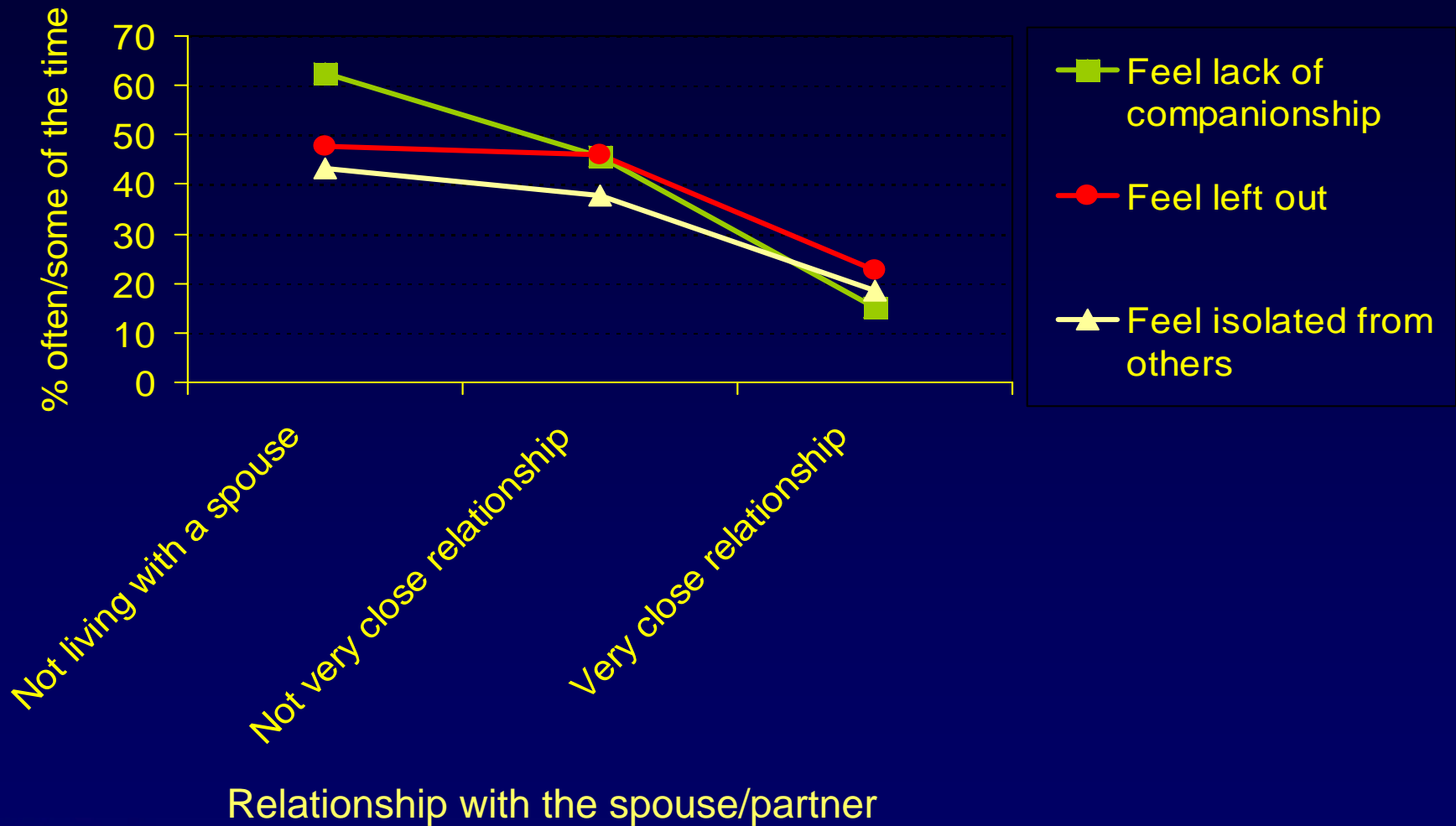




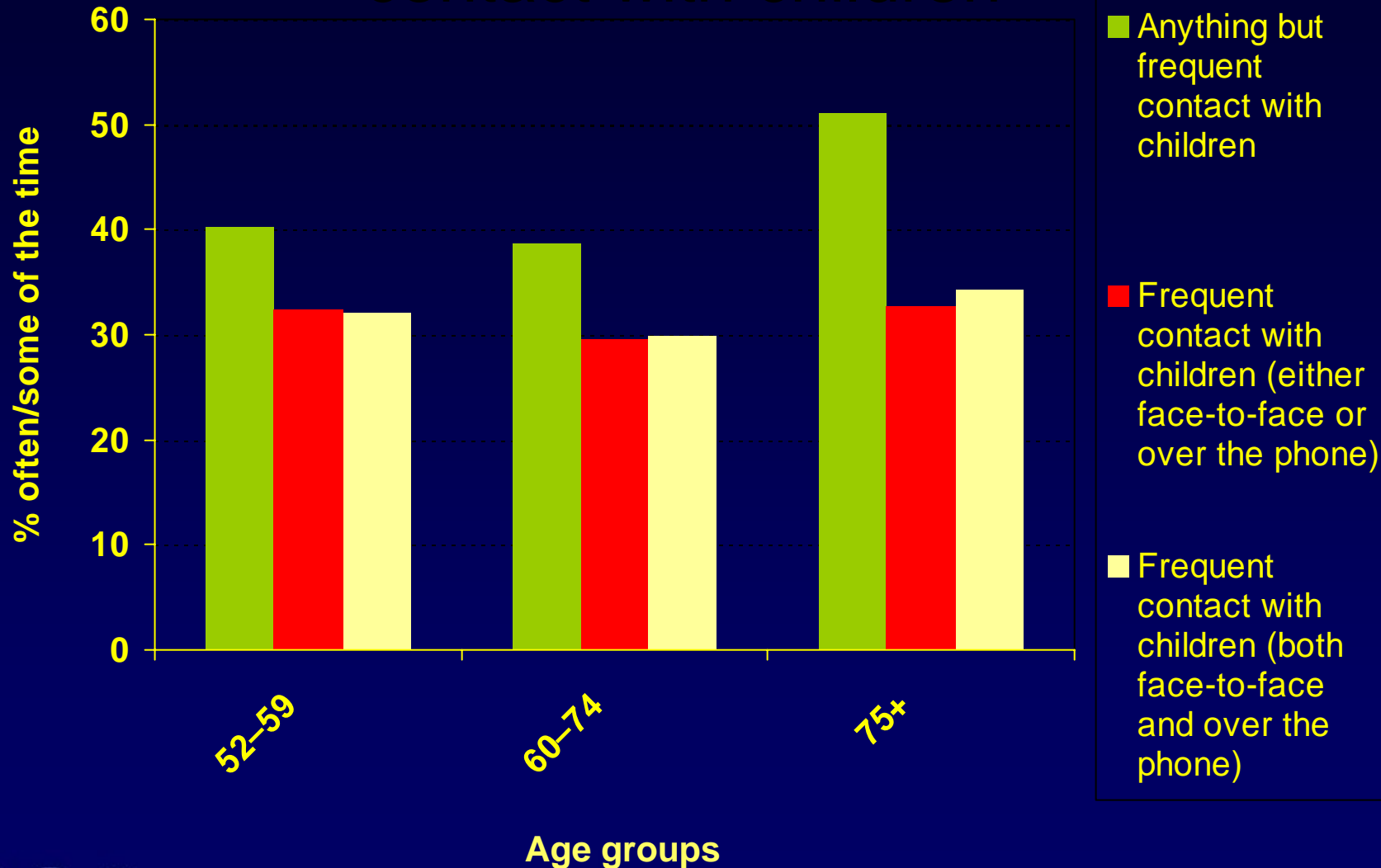
# Loneliness by marital status



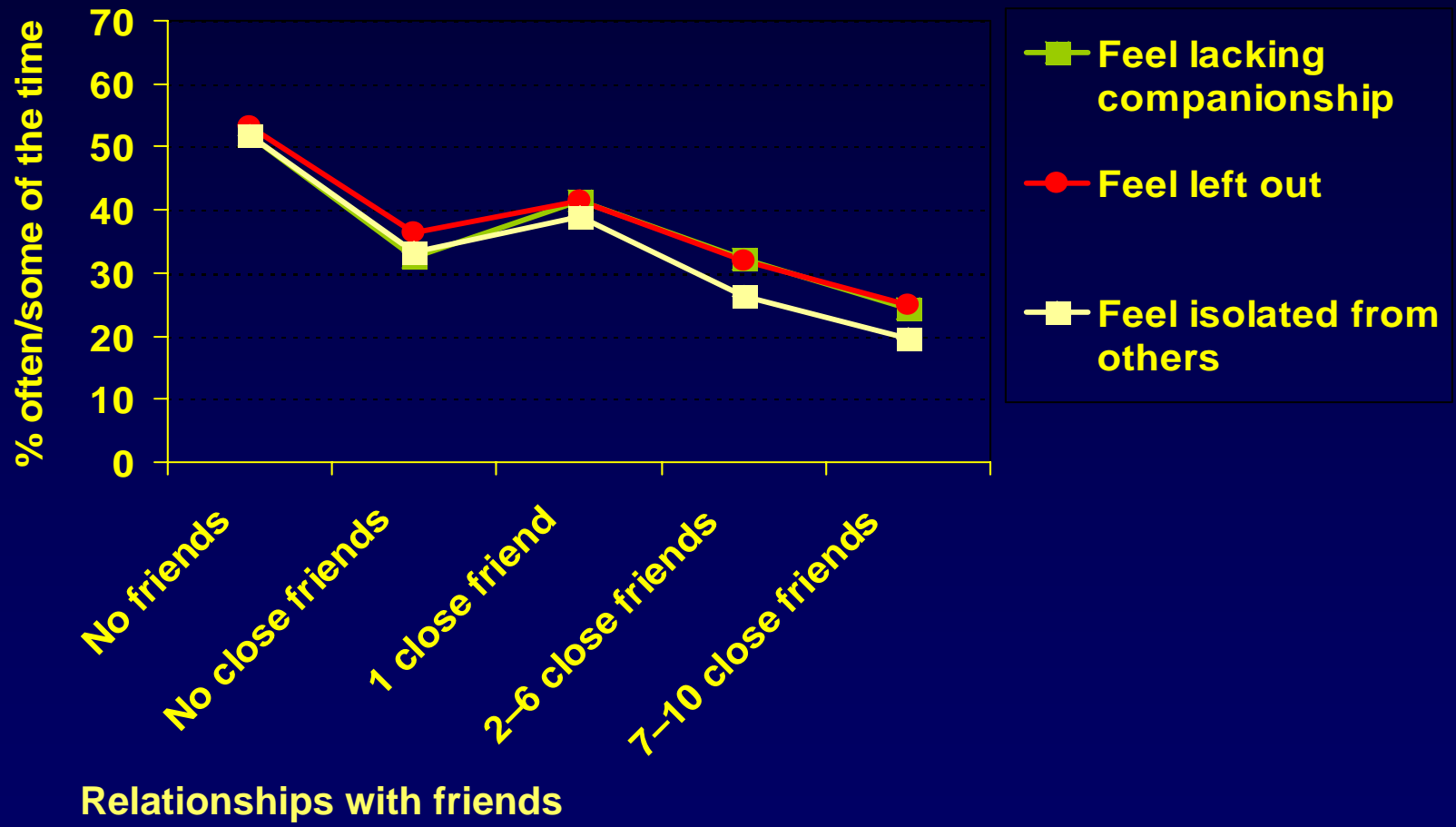
# Loneliness by living with a spouse/partner and closeness of the relationship with the spouse/partner



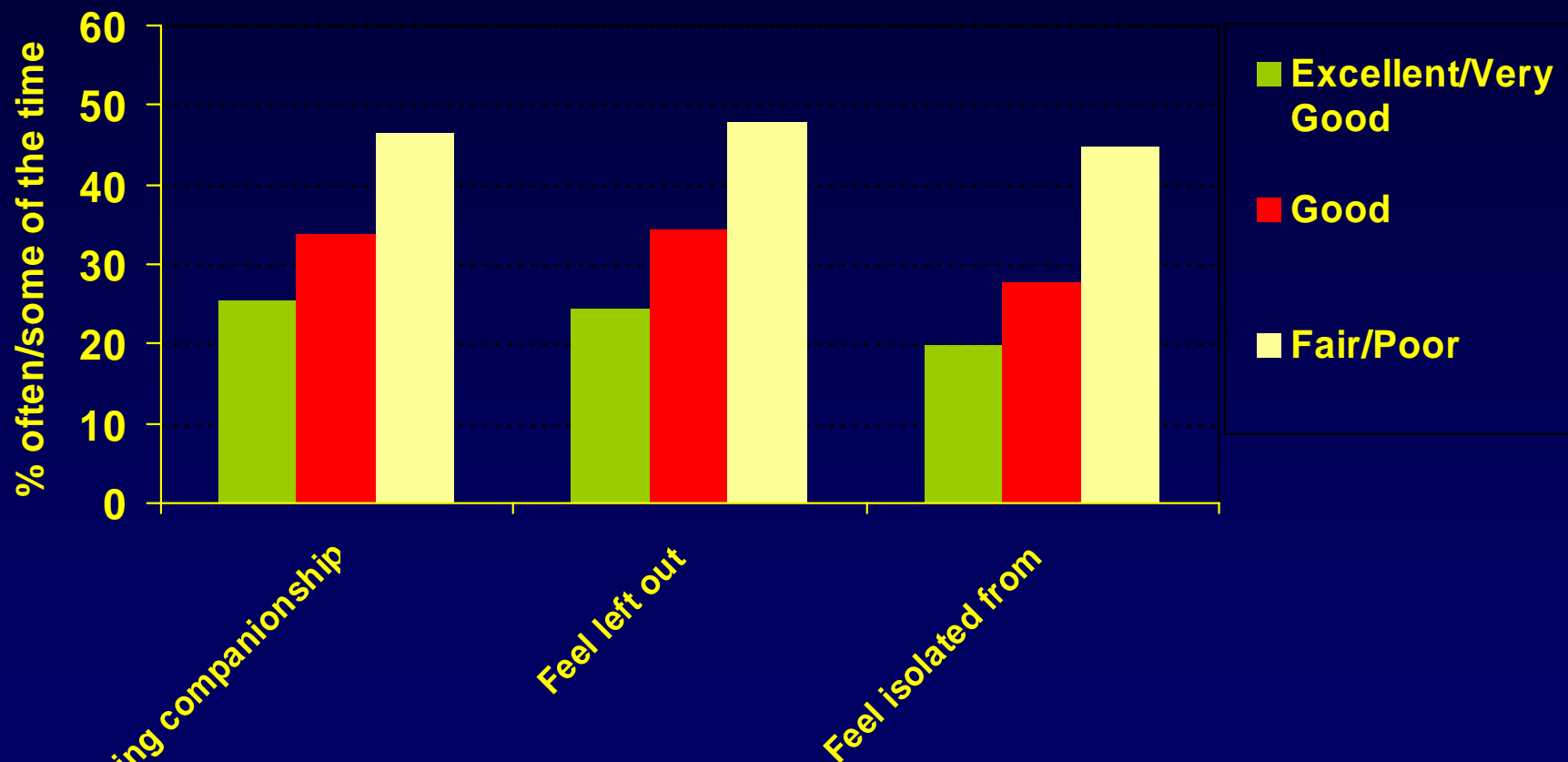
# “Feel left out” by age and frequency of contact with children



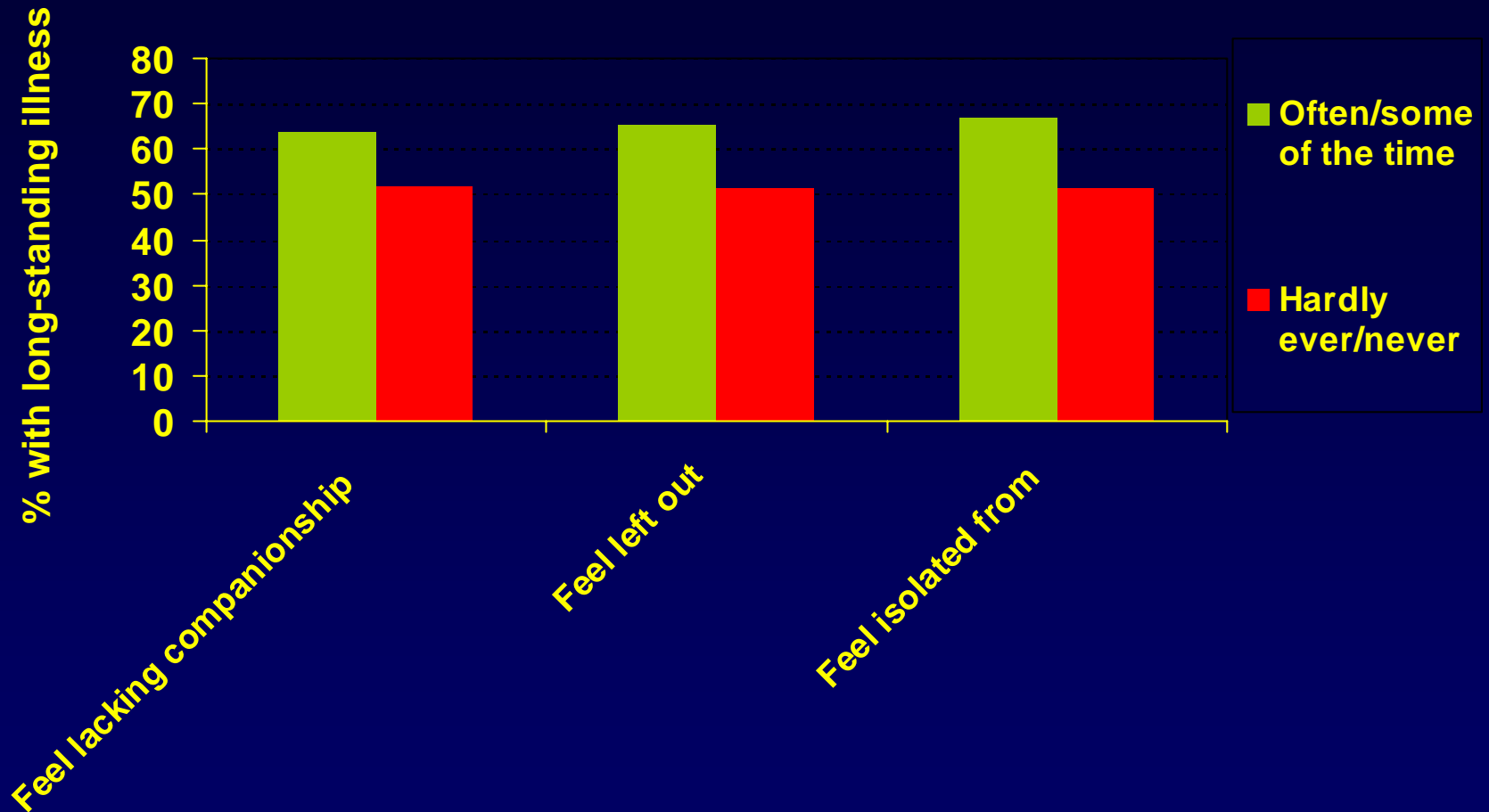
# Loneliness by having close friends and closeness to them



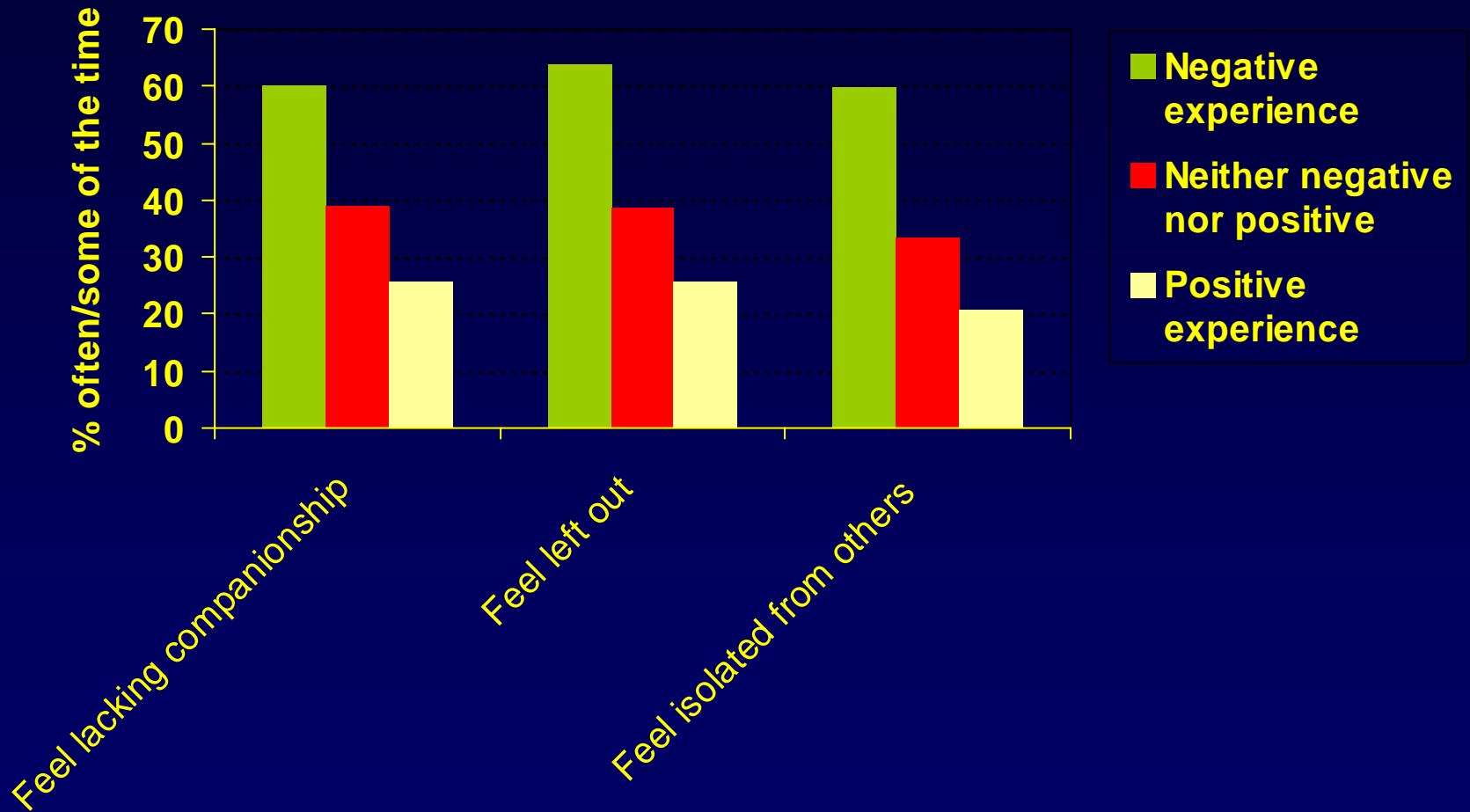
# Self-rated health and loneliness



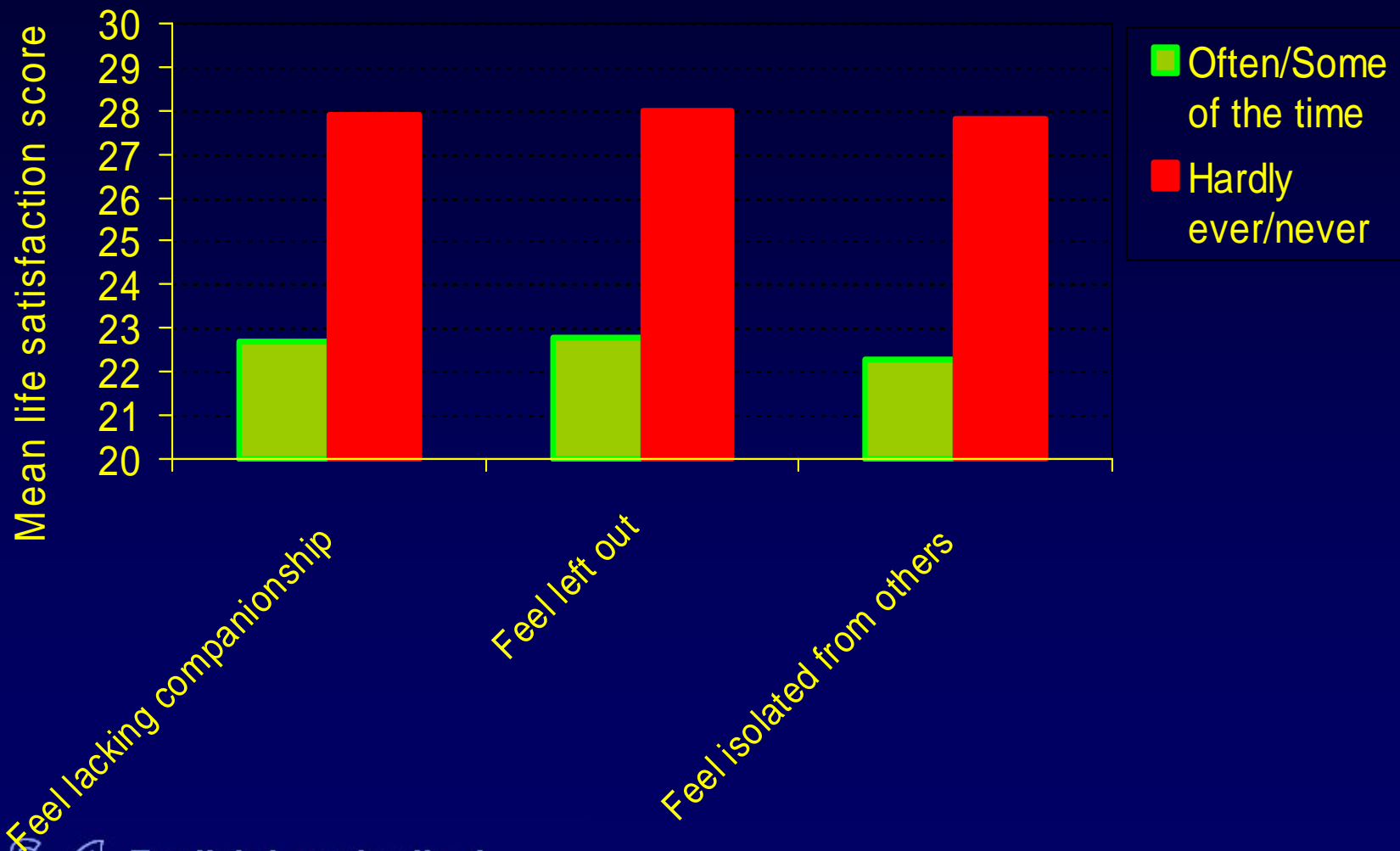
# Long-standing illness by loneliness



# Ageing experiences and loneliness

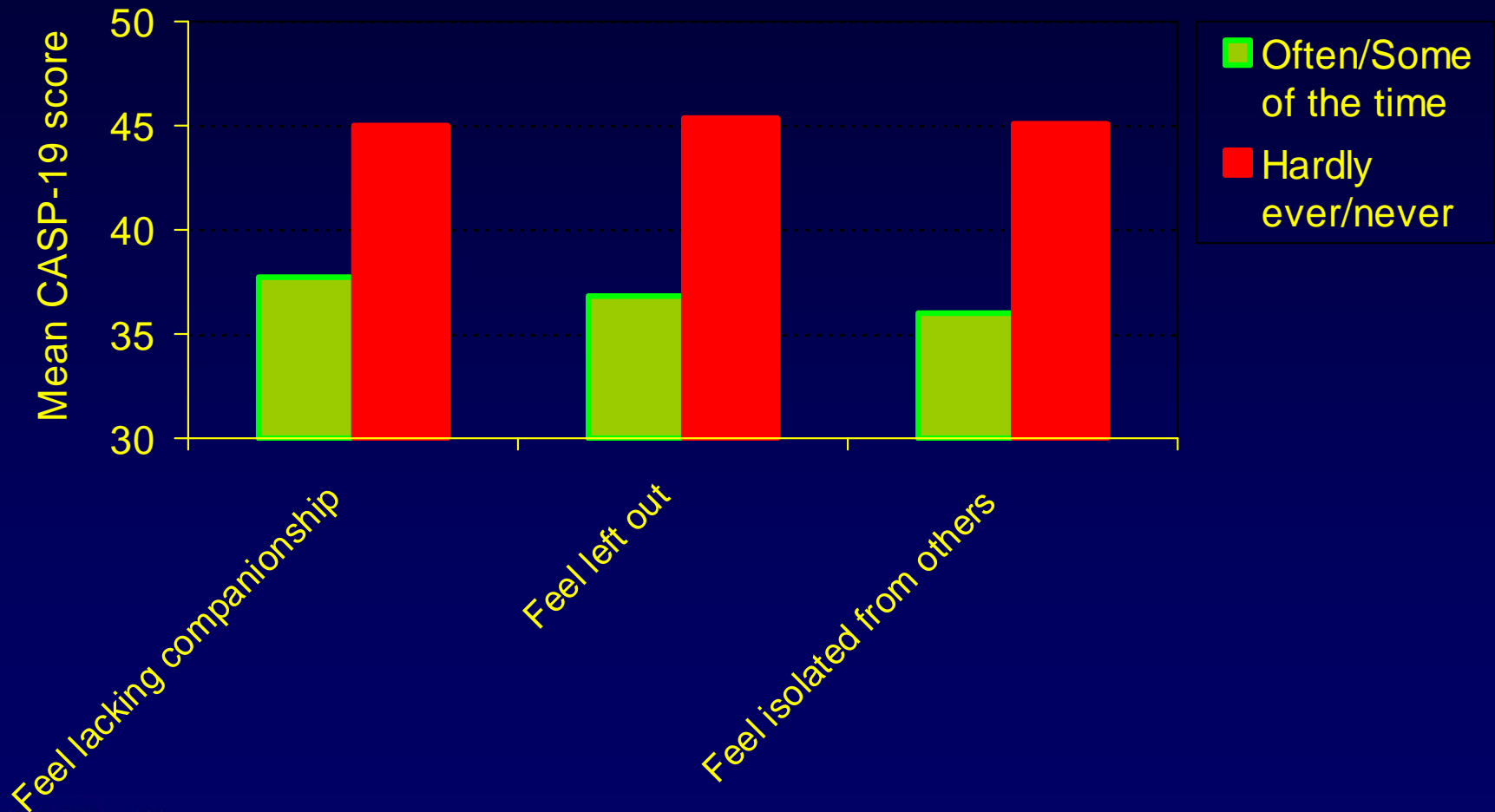


# Life satisfaction (SWLS) mean score by loneliness





# Quality of life (CASP-19) mean score by loneliness



...but do all these relationships hold in multivariate analysis?

...does loneliness relate to health outcomes and quality of life over and over age, sex, marital status and socioeconomic position?

...explaining loneliness

# Loneliness (summary score) as an outcome: linear regression analysis

Predictors	Standardized beta regression coefficient	Statistical significance
Age (five-year intervals)	-.019	.144
Sex (female)	.006	.639
Wealth (quintiles of age-standardized total wealth in w1)	.155	.000
Living with spouse/partner and closeness to her/him	.309	.000
Contact with children	.045	.001
Having friends and number of close friends	.109	.000
Contact with friends	.058	.000

...using loneliness to explain life satisfaction and quality of life

# Loneliness as a predictor of life satisfaction (SWLS): linear regression analysis

Loneliness on its own explains 24.2% of life satisfaction's variance!

It is the most significant predictor of life satisfaction in the fully adjusted model (adjusted for age, sex, total wealth, relationship with the partner and friendships)

The final model explains 34.5% of the life satisfaction (SWLS) variance.

# Loneliness as a predictor of quality of life (CASP-19): linear regression analysis

Loneliness on its own explains 33.5% of CASP-19's variance!!

It remains the most significant predictor of quality of life (CASP-19) in the fully adjusted model

The final model explains 47.7% of CASP-19 variance!

**...is loneliness the key to explain older people's happiness, wellbeing and quality of life in western societies?**



...using loneliness to explain health outcomes

# Loneliness as a predictor of self-rated health and long-standing illness: regression analysis

Loneliness on its own explains 8.5% of the self-rated health's variance

It remains a significant predictor of self-rated health in the fully adjusted model

Loneliness is similarly an significant predictor of long-standing illness or disability

# Loneliness as a predictor of self-reported hypertension and diabetes (prevalence): logistic regression analysis

Loneliness is, also, a significant predictor of hypertension and diabetes after adjustment for all selected covariates.

The same applies for glycated haemoglobin.

# Loneliness as a predictor of other health outcomes: regression analysis

Body mass index (BMI): association becomes non-significant once adjusted for wealth

Waist-hip ratio (WHR): not related

Fibrinogen: strong and significant association in the fully adjusted model

C-Reactive Protein: association becomes marginally non-significant once adjusted for wealth

# Conclusions

Spouse/partner, wealth and friends: key factors for loneliness.

Loneliness: key factor for older people's quality of life, life satisfaction (well-being) and health

Therefore, it should be considered as an important correlate of health and quality of life.

# Thank you for your attention!

