The Social Determinants of Healthy Aging

David A. Sbarra, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
University of Arizona

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The SHARE Dataset

• Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE Study) has over 80,000 participants across four panel assessments

• 19,832 participants ($M$ age = 64.5 yrs, $SD$ = 10.1 yrs) had two or more assessments and were split into two independent subsamples
Measures

• Primary outcome: Cognition functioning over time
  – Executive fx: animal naming category fluency
  – Memory: immediate and delayed recall

• Key predictor: Social participation
  – Frequency of engagement/participation in four types of social activities (voluntary/charity work, sport/social club, a religious organization, and a political community organization)

• Competing predictors: Self-rated physical health, self-reported physical activity, and depressive symptoms
Latent Curve Growth Modeling
Interpretation

• A one $SD$ unit difference in participants’ social engagement/participation was equivalent to the effect of 2.21 years of chronological age.

• Social engagement/participation (as well as physical health, depressive symptoms, and physical activity) is a unique predictor of cognitive functioning.
A Provocative Hypothesis & A (Sort of Crazy) Study Idea

• Provocative Hypothesis: A strong version of cognitive enrichment privileges social cognition (Sbarra & Coan, 2016, NIA White Paper).

• Study Idea: Studying table tennis players.
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