

Gender inequalities in mental health in older age.

J. Nazroo & A. McMunn, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, Gower Street Campus, 1 - 19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 6BT
Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 1680

While gender inequalities in mental health are well-documented, much of the work in this area has focused on men and women in their reproductive years. Despite current demographic trends towards an ageing population, little work has questioned whether gender inequalities in mental health persist post-retirement, whether the generative mechanisms for these inequalities are consistent with earlier ages, or, indeed, whether they change across the life course. This paper uses data from the first wave of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), a panel study of 12,000 people aged 50 and older, to address these questions. ELSA, has a range of well-being measures, including the CES-D depression scale, the GHQ12 psychological health scale and the CASP19 quality of life scale, as well as a wide range of contextual factors, such as retirement and marital status, socioeconomic factors, disability, unpaid caring, and psychosocial factors such as control. This paper examines the patterning of gender inequalities in wellbeing, and the contribution of these factors to inequalities in mental health among those aged 50 plus.