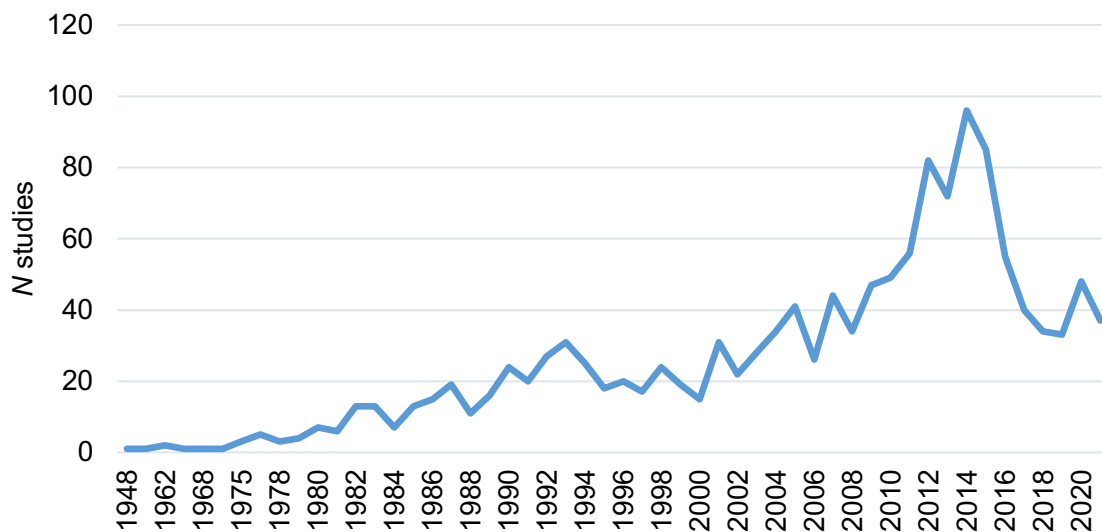


Call for Data Papers on Loneliness

The Journal of Open Psychology Data (JOPD) is inviting contributions to a Special Collection of data papers describing datasets from psychological research on loneliness. The data papers may be broad in scope, as long as they describe psychology datasets on loneliness and outline the reuse potential of these datasets for the scientific community—be it for secondary analysis, theory building, teaching, etc. The Special Collection aims to cover data from a broad range of studies, designs, and population groups—from large, representative survey programs to small studies using student samples.

In the last decade, the phenomenon of loneliness has not only been placed on the political agenda (e.g., in Japan, the UK, Germany, and the United States), it has also increasingly become a topic of research. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the growth of loneliness research in the period from 1948 to 2020 based on $N = 1,376$ published studies on the topic extracted from 14 meta-analyses and systematic reviews (marked with an asterisk in the References section). Following the peak in 2014, a further increase in loneliness research likely occurred after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1. Research Publications on Loneliness, 1948–2020

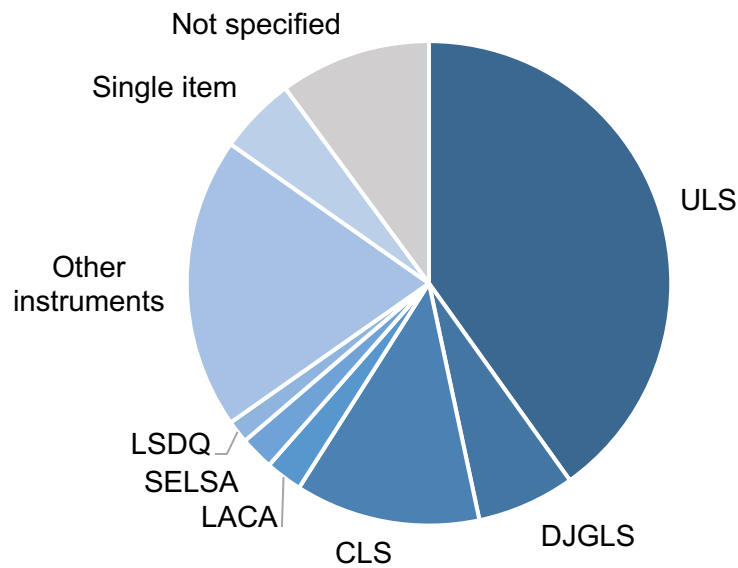


Note. Own analysis based on $N = 1,376$ published studies extracted from the following meta-analyses and systematic reviews (excluding duplicates): Barjaková & Garner, 2022; Buecker et al., 2020; Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2016; Dahlberg et al., 2022; Ernst et al., 2022; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015; Lyu & Forsyth, 2021; Maes et al., 2019; Morrish & Medina-Lara, 2021; Mund et al., 2020; O'Day & Heimberg, 2021; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001; Rico-Urbe et al., 2018; Schwartz-Mette et al., 2020.

Loneliness can broadly be defined as the subjective (and negative) perception of isolation, which can be detrimental to general health and well-being (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 2006; Marangoni & Ickes, 1989; Motta, 2021; Perlman & Peplau, 1998; Russell et al., 2012;

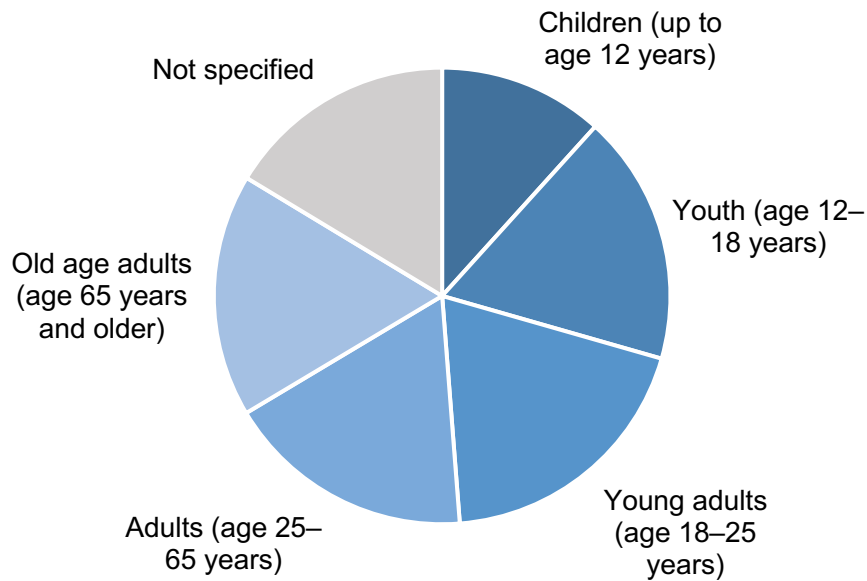
Seemann, 2022; Sønderby & Wagoner, 2012; Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015; Surkalim et al., 2022; Qualter et al., 2015; Weiss, 1973). In the area of research on loneliness, different approaches have been used to describe and explain the phenomenon. For example, from a basic psychological needs perspective, loneliness can be described as "a distressing feeling that accompanies the perception that one's social needs are not being met by the quantity or especially the quality of one's social relationships" (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010, p. 1). From a cognitive discrepancy perspective, it can be characterized as "the unpleasant experience that occurs when there is a subjective discrepancy between desired and perceived availability and quality of social interactions" (Ma et al., 2020, p. 839). Further, when conceptualizing loneliness, a distinction is often made between *emotional* loneliness (perceived absence of an intimate relationship) and *social* loneliness (perceived absence of a broader social network; e.g., de Jong Gierveld & Kamphuis, 1985; Russell, 1996; Weiss, 1973; Wolters et al., 2023).

To assess the construct of loneliness, researchers rely mainly on measurement instruments such as the UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS; Russell et al., 1980; Russell et al, 1978; Russell, 1996); the 11-item de Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (DJGLS), also known as the Rasch-Type Loneliness Scale (RTLIS; de Jong Gierveld & Kamphuis, 1985; de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 1999); the 6-item DJGLS (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 2006); and the Children's Loneliness Scale (CLS; Asher et al., 1984). Figure 2 provides an overview of the most commonly used measurement instruments in loneliness research. Loneliness in adults has been measured with items such as "I feel left out" (ULS) and "I miss having a really close friend" (DJGLS). Loneliness in children or adolescents has been measured with items such as "I feel alone" (CLS) and "I feel I have very strong ties with my parents" (Loneliness and Aloneness Scale for Children and Adolescents [LACA]). For indicators of the psychometric properties and measurement invariance of loneliness scales, see, for example, von Hudyana et al. (2022), and Hawkley et al. (2016). For correlations among a broad set of loneliness scales, see Maes et al. (2017).

Figure 2: Measurement Instruments Used in Research on Loneliness

Notes. Own analysis based on the coding of $N = 1,376$ published studies extracted from the following meta-analyses and systematic reviews (without duplicates): Barjaková and Garneró, 2022; Buecker et al., 2020; Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2016; Dahlberg et al., 2022; Ernst et al., 2022; Holt-Lunstad et al. 2015; Lyu & Forsyth, 2021; Maes et al., 2019; Morrish & Medina-Lara, 2021; Mund et al., 2020; O'Day & Heimberg, 2021; Pinguat & Sörensen, 2001; Rico-Urbe et al., 2018; Schwartz-Mette et al., 2020. ULS = UCLA Loneliness Scale; DJGLS = 11-item de Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (aka Rasch-Type Loneliness Scale [RTLTS]) or 6-item de Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale; CLS = Children's Loneliness Scale; LACA = Loneliness and Aloneness Scale for Children and Adolescents; SELSA = Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults; LSDQ = Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Questionnaire.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it particularly clear that loneliness is not a phenomenon that affects only specific age groups or world regions. An examination of the 1,376 published studies extracted from the aforementioned 14 meta-analyses and systematic reviews (marked with an asterisk in the References section) revealed that loneliness can be observed in all age groups (see Figure 3). And although the United States and Europe accounted for 31% and 25%, respectively, of the 1,376 studies, the remaining 44% covered many countries in other regions of the world.

Figure 3: Age Groups Studied in Loneliness Research

Note. Own analysis based on the coding of $N = 1,376$ published studies extracted from the following meta-analyses and systematic reviews (without duplicates): Barjaková and Garnero, 2022; Buecker et al., 2020; Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2016; Dahlberg et al., 2022; Ernst et al., 2022; Holt-Lunstad et al. 2015; Lyu & Forsyth, 2021; Maes et al., 2019; Morrish & Medina-Lara, 2021; Mund et al., 2020; O'Day & Heimberg, 2021; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001; Rico-Urbe et al., 2018; Schwartz-Mette et al., 2020.

In the context of existing research on loneliness—a phenomenon that negatively impacts individuals and societies worldwide—and with the aim of encouraging further research on this pressing topic, we invite the scientific community to submit contributions to the Special Collection from now on (until November 2024). While the publication of the Special Collection as a whole is scheduled for 2024/2025, the individual data papers will be published open access online as soon as they have been peer reviewed, accepted, and finalized. For information about the Journal of Open Psychology Data, and for comprehensive author guidelines, please visit the journal website: <https://openpsychologydata.metajnl.com/>.

Please feel free to forward this call for papers to interested colleagues.

Débora B. Maehler

Editor Journal of Open Psychology Data

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