

THE ELDERLY ARE LESS LONELY THAN THEY WERE 20 YEARS AGO: RESEARCH

Society

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Photo: Depositphotos.com

Today's elderly are less likely to face a life of loneliness than they would have been 20 years ago, **research** conducted by Tilburg University has shown.

The generally accepted premise that the loss of strong neighbourhood ties, the fact that people no longer go to church and individualisation is leading to more loneliness among the elderly is not true, researchers Bianca Suanet and Theo van Tilburg claim.

Their study, *Psychology and aging*, which was published in the journal of the American Psychological Association, shows that the elderly more often have a partner, have more daily contacts and enjoy a more varied network of friends. Individualisation is not necessarily a driver for loneliness.



Suanet told the paper that people have a cliché image of lonely people. 'It's not always people who have few contacts. It can be the subjective lack of one particular contact or very unsatisfactory social relationships.'

The individual elderly person is becoming less lonely but the problem of loneliness is increasing on a collective level because more people are reaching a greater age, the paper said. The over-75s in particular are more likely to become lonely as partners and relatives die and illness takes its toll.

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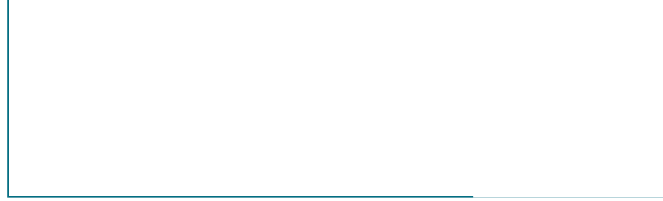
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