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The mood of the elderly in Castellón (Spain) is good, they show satisfaction with life but the perception of their quality is not so favourable

The [study on the psychological well-being of the elderly and unwanted loneliness carried out](#) by the Castelló Provincial Council with the Benicarló-Vinaròs Social Services Laboratory and the Inter-University Institute of Local Development of the Universitat Jaume I has shown that the state of mind of the elderly in the province is quite good, that they value satisfaction with life positively, but that the perception of quality of life is not so favourable.

The president of the Provincial Council of Castelló, José Martí, and the vice-president and deputy for Social Welfare, Patricia Puerta, presented the results of the study accompanied by the researcher Raquel Agost Felip and the researcher Daniel Pinazo Calatayud, directors of the report. The conclusions have also shown that older people carry out some kind of social activity or physical exercise on a daily basis and although they experience a slight feeling of loneliness, they do not feel lonely and their state of depression is at a minimum.

The aim of the report is to serve as a guideline for the planning and management of the public social services system in order to make progress in the care and response to the needs of the elderly, especially those who live alone. The president of the Provincial Council, José Martí, indicated that the report "has to be and will be our guide to improve care for the elderly who need it, because people, as human beings, need to be integrated and participate in social life and the institutions have to ensure that this is the case".

By age groups, between 55-59 years old, life satisfaction is worse, there is a feeling of loneliness and a greater state of depression. Among 60-64 year olds there is a greater feeling of unwanted loneliness which is related to feelings of fear, sadness, anguish and helplessness. Among 65-75 year olds there is a high activity profile and they perceive satisfaction and quality of life. Community intervention should be increased because unwanted loneliness is on the rise, especially among women. In the case of those over 75 years of age, a greater self-image of being alone has been observed.

Gender differences are evident in that women have a worse perception of quality of life due to their role as carers, although there is a positive generational shift towards women's autonomy. They have a feeling of being less accompanied, but they tend to

carry out daily social activities and participate more actively in the community. In the case of men, they are more depressed if they live alone in towns of less than 10,000 inhabitants and carry out daily social activities in the 55-59 age group.

In the opinion of the research team, there is a population at risk in the retirement age group (before and immediately after retirement). They therefore recommend that programmes should be designed according to demographic profiles (age, gender, rural or urban) and that special attention should be paid to people aged 55-65 because there is little provision for this age group. In addition, they recall the need to promote territorial and social equity in order to overcome mobility and economic limitations in accessing health, social and cultural resources.

The research team applied a quantitative and qualitative methodology. On the one hand, it reviewed bibliographical sources on concepts such as active and healthy ageing; quality of life and life satisfaction; perception of loneliness, emotional state in unwanted loneliness and carried out a survey of 384 people aged 55-90 (269 in towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants and 115 in towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants). On the other hand, it has focused on conducting focus groups and personal interviews for the qualitative aspect.

Raquel Agost is coordinator of the group Social Innova-Social Innovation and Human Development/IIDL, which carries out research on social cohesion, quality of life and knowledge of social services. Daniel Pinazo holds a PhD in Social Psychology and is a member of the Social Development and Peace Research Group, an expert in meditation and mindfulness techniques.