

# PSYCHOLOGICAL-SOCIAL ATTITUDES OF SENIORS TOWARDS STRESSFUL SITUATIONS IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

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**ABSTRACT**

**Aim.** The main goal of the article is to point out the attitude of seniors to stressful situations in the home environment from a psychological-social perspective. The authors identify selected categories of problem areas in the lives of seniors, which they later analyse in qualitative research.

**Methods.** The authors used a literary-descriptive method and an open coding theory grounded in the empirical investigation of the methods. Qualitative research was carried out through interviews with seniors in which they identify burdensome problem situations and look for new solutions. start the analytical induction, the authors draw attention to new knowledge in individual problems of stress situations in seniors.

**Results.** Seniors at home experience problematic situations associated with loneliness, loss, but also the very retirement of a partner and disrupted intergenerational relationships in the family. Home care is one of the solutions of these socio-psychological systems.

**Conclusion.** Relationships in the family, which should be based on love, understanding, understanding and mutual help, also depend on the attitude of the senior citizen and his family towards an important situation. Relationships in the family to a large extent also affect the productivity of the senior's family. Here, a home care service proves to be a suitable alternative and help for the family.

**Keywords:** family, senior, psychological burden, social burden, categories, embedded theory

**INTRODUCTION**

Human needs are individual, changing in time and space in which they live. During aging, there are changes in health and functional status, changes in partner, family and social relationships, which change human needs and their satisfaction. New situations arise in the life of a senior citizen, which he must deal with and which he must be able to accept (Al-Hawamdeh, 2022; Ptáčková & Ptáček, 2021).

## RETIREMENT

Retirement is considered the beginning of the seniority period. Seniors are looking forward to retirement, they are looking forward to not being under pressure and not having to submit to superiors at work and they will be able to do what they want, but when this moment is about to come, many will start to take stock and realise the change that they have this fact will bring.

Retirement represents a challenge for a person's ability to adapt not only to biological changes, but also to lifestyle changes that retirement will bring (Bačová & Halama, 2021; Kondrla et al., 2023). It belongs to the most risky periods of an aging person, where a large number of demands are placed on him for adaptation and the period of the greatest life crises (Alam & Hameed, 2023; Hagoni et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2023; Králik et al., 2022).

For some people, retirement is a life crisis. His social status and lifestyle will change, to which he must adapt. These changes can cause someone to lose the personality of a senior (Kobylarek, Błaszczński et al., 2022). During this period, the secondary phase of socialisation takes place—the accumulation of new social situations. Old people become dependent on their surroundings, social contacts weaken, and pessimism sets in (Šmidová et al., 2013).

On the other hand, seniors get more free time for their hobbies and interests, for spending time with their family, grandchildren, and for regenerating their physical or psychological strength (Budayová, Svoboda et al., 2022).

Retirees face a new task consisting of determining new life challenges, goals, plans for the future, redefining themselves, coping with losses and finding a new way of life. Adapting to a new situation requires a lot of effort and activity, which can cause a disturbance in the psychological functioning and discomfort of the senior (Bačová & Halama, 2021). Most people perceive retirement as a confirmation of aging where a new, senior stage in a person's life begins, while coming to terms with this fact is not always an easy process (Kobylarek, Madej et al., 2022).

The senior may feel insignificant, inferior, which may lead to resignation and the activation of defensive strategies. In this period, the need for self-realisation is very important, which is related to the preservation of freedom, self-sufficiency, independence and the possibility to decide on one's own actions (Budayová, Ludvigh Cintulová et al.2023; Ptáčková & Ptáček, 2021).

## LOSS OF LIFE PARTNER

The loss of a life partner, friend or close person is one of the most difficult life events in the life of every person, for which no one is prepared. Accepting this situation and

dealing with it is very difficult and it is not always possible, especially if a person spends most of his life with that partner.

The survivor's isolation may begin to manifest itself, there is a loss of experiences and shared experiences of some life opportunities, loss of income and lack of interest in the social environment. The survivor has to deal with the death of a loved one and get used to a different life than the one he led up to that time. The loss of a loved one changes the identity, changes the role in life, husbands and wives become widows, the usual way of being changes and the feeling of loneliness, missing a partner or returning in thoughts to the past remains (Hašková et al., 2020; Hvozdík, 2014).

The loneliness of losing a partner, compounded by the gradual death of peers and the independence of children, represents a great psychological burden and a loss of security, which is very difficult for seniors to cope with. This can lead to a deepening of passivity, the emergence of depression or anxiety states (Judák et al., 2022). Losing a partner, living alone and having to accept help from others are the most difficult transitions (Budayová, Pavlíková et al., 2022; Hvozdík, 2014).

The feeling of loneliness when losing a partner can have a negative impact on the senior's quality of life, physical and psychological condition. Interpersonal relationships often help survivors to more easily accept a new situation that has arisen in their lives, they can ensure a sense of security, solidarity or support activity and independence (Ptáčková & Ptáček, 2021). Research confirms that strengthening social ties not only helps seniors combat loneliness but also contributes to their overall health and happiness (Tkáčová, Gadušová et al., 2023). Experts also point out that being surrounded by loved ones and friends is a key condition for mental health (Tkáčová et al., 2024).

Seniors who lived alone, without family members, experience this situation the worst. They experience the loss of their partner very hard, as they remain alone in the house, which leads to the fact that they begin to fall into depression and begin to think about ending their lives. Here, the social contacts of the senior and especially the family, which plays an important role in the life of the senior, play an important role (Maturkanič, et al., 2022; Poledníková, 2006).

Coping with the loss of a loved one is worse for men than for women, as women rely more on relationships, which helps them overcome this period and accept the situation they have entered. When men reach a certain age, they are significantly less interested in relationships than women, which impairs their ability to adapt to the situation. It follows from the above that the differences between men and women in experiencing the loss of a loved one brings different burden consequences for men and women (Hvozdík, 2014; Petrovič et al., 2023).

## LONELINESS

They prefer contacts with people they know and with family that is very close to them. As a person gradually ages, social contacts decrease, which leads to a feeling of loneliness, emptiness or isolation, while these feelings are the cause of stressful situations for seniors (Ptáčková & Ptáček, 2021).

Loneliness is a personal feeling of abandonment, loneliness, which is associated with the absence of social contacts, the loss of significant emotional relationships and is often accompanied by symptoms of psychological distress. It represents a subjective feeling that cannot be observed from the outside (Langmeier & Krejčířová, 2006; Peshkovskaya et al., 2024). Loneliness, especially in old age, is very dangerous. Long-term feeling of loneliness accelerates degenerative processes, while insufficient personal contact with other people results in the gradual psychological decline of the senior. This condition brings with it a deterioration of the state of health both physically and psychologically (Hangoni et al., 2014; Murgaš et al., 2022).

The authors Jozef Výrost and Ivan Slaměník mention two forms of loneliness: social and emotional loneliness. These two forms of loneliness can be linked or independent of each other. Emotional loneliness is when a person feels the absence of a close person or an intimate relationship with a specific person. Social loneliness represents the absence of friends and acquaintances, with whom a person realised his hobbies, interests and activities (Ferreira et al., 2023; Výrost & Slameník, 2001).

It is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of solitude and loneliness. Solitude is voluntary and every person sometimes seeks it, especially when they want to relax and have some time for themselves, but then they go back to social contacts. Conversely, loneliness is involuntary and arises from dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of social relationships (Ptáčková & Ptáček, 2021).

Man is by nature a social creature, he needs to connect with other people, he is dependent on help from other people, he cannot survive alone, in isolation. Especially seniors are subject to this danger (Hangoni et al., 2014). For this reason, it is necessary to ensure that seniors are not alone and that they participate in social life (Budayová, Roubalová et al., 2023; Haškovcová, 2012). Let's add that the recent pandemic confirmed that participation in social life can also be facilitated through social media (Tkáčová, Pavlikova, Maturkanic et al., 2023). This modern technology allows access to the Internet not only through computers but also increasingly through mobile devices, thereby expanding the availability of online content in virtually any environment (Tkáčová, Pavlíková, Azizi et al., 2023), and providing users with convenience, flexible connectivity, entertainment, education, and more (Tkáčová et al., 2021).

## INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE FAMILY

The family environment is considered the first and basic living environment of every person. The organisation of family life, the relationships between spouses, parents, children, grandchildren and siblings express the peculiarity of the time, tradition or culture. The family fulfills a social and socialising function and at the same time unites individual generations (Kohoutek, 1998; Roubalová et al., 2022).

However, intergenerational changes bring problems between the older and younger generations. Seniors often forget that they have to leave some of the tasks they held in their youth to the younger generation, as they are no longer able to handle these tasks themselves. At the same time, they have to accept the new tasks that the senior period brings them. If there is no compromise between generations in the family, misunderstandings or misunderstandings occur, which leads to conflicts (Hvozdík, 2014; Ludvigh Cintulová et al., 2023). Each family member fulfills many tasks in life, not only within the family, but also outside it. The lack of time and matching the schedule at home and outside the home requires a lot of compromises from all family members (Jeřábek, 2013; Roubalová et al., 2023). However, seniors like to spend time with young people as they recharge their energy and give them optimism. However, they cannot imagine functioning in the family as it is today, without having children and not being married, so they eagerly await the birth of grandchildren, with whom they have a very warm relationship (Haškovcová, 2012; Stirparo et al., 2024). Family relationships have their social and ethical aspects. However, if these aspects do not fulfill their function, care for the elderly is also insufficient and does not work as it should. The senior feels very lonely and abandoned in such a family, which also affects his physical and psychological condition (Hangoni et al., 2014; Tkáčová et al., 2022).

## FAMILY CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

The family is the basis of human society, it is a natural group that has the characteristics of a formal and informal group at the same time. It fulfills tasks towards its members as well as towards society. It is a social entity that is an important link between the individual and society. At the same time, it represents a special form of integrating a person into the social structure and at the same time creates it (Gáborová & Gáborová, 2008; Tvrdoň et al., 2022).

Family relationships are of great importance to all its members throughout life. An old person expects interest in his person, but at the same time he is also interested in the problems of other family members. For an old person, the family is the only social group that provides him with the necessary emotional support, a specific role and preserves his identity (Hangoni et al., 2014; Vansač & Belovičová, 2019). It is the best thing when caring for a senior. Good family relationships play an important

role in the hierarchy of values of senior citizens. The family must want to take care of the senior even if it disrupts the whole family system or they are overburdened. At the same time, the family must have the conditions and sufficient knowledge about the provision of such care (Bursová & Budayová, 2017; Vansač, 2023).

Family care for the elderly is an important part of ensuring care for older members of society. The family background is the greatest security and support in old age. In the family, care is based on the principle of gratitude, love, mutual understanding and solidarity. Solidarity is based on the expectation of mutual help, compassion and selflessness (Budayová, Roubalová, 2023). Spontaneous solidarity based on emotional and kinship ties occurs within the family. Caring for a loved one strengthens mutual relationships and coexistence. However, the family must want, know and be able to provide care (Vojtíšek, 2018).

One of the obstacles is the lack of free time due to workload or care for other family members. For this reason, the family should very carefully consider their options and abilities to manage such care, as it is not only about helping with activities that the senior cannot do, but also about motivating the senior, leading him to an active life and trying to maintain his independence at least to a certain extent as long as possible (Ptáčková & Ptáček, 2021).

Elderly care can be defined as ‘custodial or supportive assistance or service performed for the happiness and well-being of elderly persons who, due to chronic or mental illness or incapacity, cannot perform these activities themselves. Family care is experienced as a labor of love, emotional, tightly connected and dependent between the caregiver and the cared for, which must continue even if certain problems arise (Jeřábek, 2013).

Family care for the elderly focuses on help and assistance with self-care activities. One must not forget their mental state, personal relationships, support, provision of information and financial security, which largely affects their satisfaction and joy in life. The harmony between the social and mental areas is important, and if it does not work, a person finds himself in depression, loses the meaning of life, feels sadness and loneliness (Hrozenská, 2011; Vansač & Noga, 2021).

The most common family caregivers of seniors or sick relatives are women who provide informal care. The willingness of the family to take care of the elderly is great, but at the same time, the family experiences fears of job loss, reduced financial security, but also personal discomfort, physical and psychological burden (Franzenová, 2012; Jeřábek, 2013). The family represents an ideal and natural social environment for seniors, while it is their most important social security, offering all kinds of care. It is not only a help for the senior, but also a support and motivation for their quality and active life (Árpová & Árpová, 2024).

## EMPIRICAL PART

The main goal of the research was to find out and identify which stressful situations occur most often in family care for the elderly. Other secondary goals were to find out and compare the subjective attitude towards the life situations of loneliness and loss of a life partner and the comparison of the subjective attitude towards life situations, retirement and intergenerational relationships in the family.

- Preliminary hypothesis no. 1: We assume that the participants will state that they are more negatively affected by the loss of a life partner than by loneliness;
- Preliminary hypothesis no. 2: We assume that the participants will state that they are more negatively affected by intergenerational relationships in the family than by retirement.

In conducting the research and obtaining the necessary information, we used the interview method, simultaneously with this method, we used the observation method and the analytical induction method using verbatim transcription.

When evaluating the research results, we will also use grounded theory, which Jan Hendl (2012) describes as: “a proposal to search for specific theories that relate in a certain way to a defined population, environment or period.” The most important steps of this procedure are coding and writing notes” (pp. 243-244). The research group consisted of eight participants, the selection of participants was deliberate. We chose residents of the village over 62 years old who are going through the aging process. When evaluating the results, we used grounded theory in this research, in which we proceeded with open coding. Subsequently, we determined codes, that is, terms that are closely related to each other, and based on these codes we determined individual categories.

### **Category No. 1: Mental Youth and Mental Old Age**

*Open Coding:* Illness, old age, pain, awareness, time, ignorance, activities, adaptation, mindset.

The perception of old age is individual for each participant, as evidenced by their different answers to the first research question. Here we can observe the participants' mental attunement to the perception of the aging process. In this category, we cannot unequivocally determine that the perception of aging depends on age, life situation, or, for example, illness. to be aware of aging due to a sudden deterioration in health. It follows from this that aging itself is not only a biological process, but it is mainly the mental attitude of a person in the field of perception of his aging. When asked this question, four participants told us that they are not aware of the aging process itself, as they do not feel old. They have many hobbies, activities and attitudes towards life, for which they do not even think about old age. They still feel mentally young, which brings well-being into their lives, which we also confirmed through the observation



method, as the participants were clearly able to tell us their opinion on this question, and when they talked about it, they were cheerful and relaxed. „...Do I know when?... I'm not aware of aging yet...I don't even now realise that I'm old...And to tell you the truth, I don't feel my aging...I have many years and I don't know when...” The other side of the participants' perception of aging is the moment of realising old age with the onset of an illness or a certain period in their life, which was mentioned by five participants. They became aware of aging when their health condition worsened, which limited them in their usual activities as well as in the activities they had before the illness. These participants are aware of aging not only from the physical side, but mainly they are mentally prepared for aging and at the same time they are able to accept this condition and deal with it. “...when my joint hurt and I couldn't go to work anymore... aging in my fifties...how I had the last incident when I stopped ruling...when the health problems started...”

## **Category No. 2: Solitude and Loneliness**

*Open coding:* Death, grief, emptiness, family, loss, communication, loneliness, abandonment.

Loneliness is considered to be a de facto state where a person chooses solitude either voluntarily, when he wants to deal with something, find a solution to a certain situation, to relax, or he chooses solitude of his own free will, but under pressure, when he is worried about losing social favor or the fear of revealing his qualities, or it is involuntary loneliness, which can be the result of chance, accident or some event. This condition is easily recognisable by observing a person's external features and behavior. On the other hand, loneliness cannot be detected by observation, as it is a perception of social action, its characteristics and experiences that result from the feeling of abandonment. Loneliness is in itself very unpleasant, it is the result of the perception of inadequacy in social and family relationships. The loss of a life partner is a very serious change in a person's life, which affects him to a great extent. In the second question, we tried to find out whether the loss of a life partner affects a person's life. In the answers to this question, all participants clearly stated that the loss of a partner has a great impact on a person's life. They agreed that one begins to feel and realise loneliness. Here we can distinguish two views on the loss of a partner. The participants who have their partners answered us that the main influence of losing a partner is loneliness, but they said this only in general and maybe with the experience of others, as they have not yet experienced this state. „...I see in my relatives that the loss of a partner affected their life, they were left alone... Isn't that loneliness? that he will remain alone... he will remain alone, sad...” Participants who lost their partner also answered that they were left alone by losing their partner. A partner, a friend, a companion, a confidant suddenly disappeared from their lives, in short, they lost,

as it were, a piece of themselves. Observing their behavior during the interview, we noticed that they were taken aback by this question, and that they suddenly became thoughtful, sad, and had tears in their eyes, some even cried. From their answers, and at the same time from their reaction to the question asked, we can say that they feel lonely, because even though they have their family and loved ones around them, their life partner had an important and irreplaceable place in their life, and so they perceive loneliness more and feel empty in their life.

...I was left alone...I was left alone...he is missing everywhere...There are two of you for every worry, there are two of you for joy and by losing you lose a piece of yourself and understanding...Once again you are alone, you have no one to be with to talk...

### **Category No. 3: Absence of a Partner**

*Open coding:* Memories, family, holidays and family gatherings, anniversaries, church, grief, loss, closeness, search.

A person perceives the loss of a life partner during an ordinary day, but also on important occasions or holidays. In the third question, we wanted to find out the participants' view of life situations in which a person is most aware that he has lost someone. First of all, participants state that a person returns to memories of their partner every day. When they wake up in the morning or when they go to bed at night, they always remember their partner during the things they did together. Furthermore, the participants state that a person feels the loss of their life partner the most at family, family gatherings, weddings, on major holidays, at anniversaries, but also at activities that they did together and now have to do alone, as for example participant A stated that with his wife they always went to church together and now he has to go alone. On these different occasions, a person is often sad and remembers their partner, imagines what it would be like if a close person was between them.

... Every day, but mostly when we go to congratulate the grandchildren, when the oldest granddaughter got married, or even when I go to church... I always remember... if she goes to some kind of celebration, on holidays and when she is with her family. ..When there are holidays, or birthdays, or some anniversary... When you are left alone, you realise every day that you have lost what I liked, the best or the closest thing to you or whatever. And when you do weddings for children, then you miss your partner or your grandchildren when they grow up... at a family gathering, you already miss that person there, then it's the things you did together...

### **Category No. 4: Difference**

*Open coding:* Relative, daughter, son, granddaughter, loneliness, visits, busyness, hobbies, family, disinterest, animals.

We named the fourth category difference, as we can observe a difference of opinion on this question. When evaluating this question, we found that the participants' answers differ depending on their age. Participants under the age of 70, regardless of whether they live alone or with their relatives, state that, despite the fact that they are already of senior age, they do not feel lonely. They have children, grandchildren and relatives who are interested in them and visit them often. They know how to fill their free time with work, hobbies, they go on visits, so they don't have time to think about being alone. „...I don't feel lonely...I always fill my time...As I am not lonely at all...not because I like people, I go, visit the sick, anyone who invites me...I devote myself terribly to a lot of things...” The change of view on the feeling of loneliness is among participants over 70 years old, where we observe a different opinion. Despite the fact that they do not live alone, they have children and grandchildren with them, so they feel loneliness and lack of interest from the family. They spend more time during the day at home alone, because of work and the responsibilities of their children and grandchildren. This largely affects and increases the feeling of loneliness among this group of participants. „... I'm home alone almost all day... You have a house full of people, and even if you're old, you're alone... No one comes to me, rarely...”

### **Category No. 5: Feeling of Abandonment**

*Open coding:* Disinterest, loneliness, family, partner, equanimity, intentionality, family meetings.

The feeling of abandonment is often associated with loneliness, but a person is not always alone and still feels abandoned. In the fifth research question, we asked the participants in which situations they feel lonely. The participants' answers to this question differ and are split in half. Participants C, D, E, F do not feel lonely, as they have a family, a partner with them and they know how to fill their free time. „...I don't feel lonely...probably not, anywhere...So far I don't have any loneliness, I have a family...I haven't felt this loneliness yet...” The second group of participants, on the other hand, perceive loneliness very much, especially in the evening when they stay alone, or when there is a family celebration. In addition, Participant A stated that despite the fact that he lives in the same house with his family, he realises every day that he is left alone for everything, and at the same time he says that the family does not show interest in him and will not come to visit him. „...At night when I can't sleep...When I'm alone...In the evening when you're alone and think, or when there's some kind of family event, or some event, yes, we were there together, now you're there alone...Always...”

## Category No. 6: Life Changes after Retirement

*Open coding:* work, retirement, disability, time, hobbies, family, limitation, illness, health, vitality, energy.

Each retiree perceives the changes associated with retirement differently, so in question six we wanted to find out what changes the participants feel after retirement. The participants' perception of life changes due to retirement can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of participants C, D and F, who retired after years of service, and the second group consists of participants A, B, E, G and H, who received a disability pension before starting the old-age pension. The fundamental change in the first group of participants was that they stopped going to work, which is what they miss the most now. They consider this very fact to be a fundamental change in their lives when they retired. „... I couldn't go to work... I had to stop going to work... I guess I miss the job... I miss the job... I simply couldn't devote myself to what I liked to do, the job ...” The second group states that the fundamental change in their lives was health problems, for which they had to apply for disability or early retirement. Their health problems limited them to the extent that they could no longer do the work they loved and which they miss. They were forced to stop working and the pensioner status was an unexpected and fundamental change in their lives.

...I had to go into early retirement because of the joint I was operated on...the disease, well, they already put me on disability...the number of illnesses increased...after the heart attack, my vitality and energy changed, I have the energy, but like, hmm, I can't do what I used to do before I retired...

## Category No. 7: Diversity of Relationships

*Open coding:* Disagreement, family, children, love, worry, coping, no anger, faith in God, agreeableness, understanding, visits, joy.

Just as people's lives are diverse, so too are family relationships. When asked about family relationships, most participants state that mutual family relationships are excellent, good or pleasant. Despite the fact that sometimes family members disagree or worries arise, they try to solve them without anger and rise above the fact that their relationships are not disturbed. Family members understand each other, tolerate each other, support each other and love each other. They try to get along with each other and manage everything because they feel mutual support and love. „...relationships, the good ones...I think they are good...Good...Pleasant, relationships are good, but we don't mind...Relations are excellent...Excellent. I understand both the bride and her parents, her son, her grandchildren...” However, two participants state that the relationships in their family are all kinds of things, which can be caused by disagreements and lack of interest of family members in their person. While observing their behavior

regarding this question, we noticed that participants A and H remained thoughtful and thought about how to answer this question. It could be seen that they were getting a little nervous and didn't really want to answer, so they chose a neutral answer. "... Well, what, all kinds... All kinds..."

## **Category No. 8: Relationships in the Family at Retirement Age of Participants**

*Open coding:* Satisfaction, deepening relationships, possessions, consolidation, more time, no change, family, visits from children and grandchildren, broken relationships, loss of partner.

Family relationships play an important role in a person's life, so we wanted to find out if there was a change in family relationships after the retirement of the participants. When asked the question, the participants agree that the relationships in the family have not changed after retirement. "...Hmm, no...No...No...No...I don't feel any changes... No...No...After retirement, not even..." Participant C, E and F state that the relationships in the family have strengthened and deepened, as now that they are retired they have more time for their loved ones, they devote more time to their grandchildren and their family. Family members visit each other more and spend significantly more time with each other than when they went to work. "...I have more time with them, so the relationships are so strengthened...I don't feel any changes, I would even say that they have deepened as relationships... No. Hmm, that's right, the children are attached..." Participants A and H answered us that they felt a change in family relationships only when they lost their partner. Participant A stated that it is mainly about activities and activities that he did together with his wife. "...Relationships almost changed when the wife died..." Participant H attributes the disruption of family relationships to the division of assets after the death of a partner. Here we are shown that some family members are unable to understand, even if the parents' intentions are good in the distribution of property after death, which often disrupts family relationships to such an extent that they cannot be repaired for many years. "...When the husband died, the relationships went bad because of the assets..."

## **ANALYTICAL INDUCTION**

*Preliminary hypothesis No. 1:* We assume that the participants will state that they are more negatively affected by the loss of a life partner than by loneliness.

From the answers of the participants, we can conclude that the loss of a life partner will fundamentally affect a person's life. They agree that what affects a person the most is that he is suddenly left alone for everything. He has no one to share his worries or

joys with, he is looking for a partner everywhere. The loss of a life partner also greatly affects the life of a senior citizen. He finds himself in a position he does not know and for which he was not prepared. Every day he perceives that his partner is no longer here. He constantly comes back to him in his memories, realises his absence at family gatherings, celebrations or various holidays, and he always takes stock and thinks about what it would be like if that partner was there with him. Regarding the perception of loneliness, we received different answers depending on the age of the participants. Participants under the age of 70 do not perceive and do not feel loneliness, on the other hand, the age category over 70 years feels loneliness more intensively, despite the fact that they have relatives around them. They are aware of loneliness every day, at night when they are alone and at family events. At the same time, we found out that the participants who still have a partner answered us about loneliness in general, as they do not feel it because they are not alone. In the case of participants who no longer have a life partner, we found out that they rather feel lonely because they miss their partner during normal daily tasks, when they go to sleep or when they get up in the morning, and their family cannot adequately replace this close person.

*Final hypothesis No. 1:* We assume that participants who have lost a life partner are affected by this loss and feel more lonely than those who still have a partner.

*Preliminary hypothesis no. 2:* We assume that the participants will state that they are more negatively affected by intergenerational relationships in the family than by retirement.

Participants' answers to these questions vary depending on the age of the participants and the reason for retirement. We can state that the participants agree that the fundamental change upon retirement was the loss of work, which they miss. Here, however, we found that the participants who retired after working the necessary years perceive only the loss of their job as a fundamental change, but the participants who had to go on disability or early retirement perceive, in addition to the loss of work, a fundamental change associated with their health condition, which restricts them in the performance of any activity. In the seventh and eighth research questions, we asked the participants about their family relationships and whether family relationships changed after retirement. Most of the interviewees stated that there are good relationships in their families based on love, understanding, tolerance and mutual respect. Even if sometimes worries or disagreements come into their relationships, they try to resolve them and strengthen their relationships by frequent family visits, helping each other and taking care of each other. At the same time, we discovered that retirement did not change the relationships in the families of the participants, on the contrary, the relationships deepened and strengthened as they have more time for their families. We observe a different answer for two participants, whose family relationships did not change due to retirement, but due to the loss of a partner already at retirement age. The main change is in the manifestation of disinterest on the part of the family in their person as well as disagreements over the division of property.

*Final hypothesis No. 2:* We assume that the participants who were forced to apply for a disability pension feel the changes associated with retirement more than those who started the old-age pension.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of our research was to find out and identify the occurrence of the most frequent stressful situations in the life of a senior in the context of family care for seniors. From the research, we found out that certain life situations that come with the senior period affect the life of seniors and cause them a burden. However, it is not just one situation, but usually several situations that occur in the life of a senior at the same time. However, it should be noted here that each person is individual and perceives the coming situation differently.

From the knowledge gained in this research, we found out that a big burden in the life of a senior is the loss of a life partner, which brings with it a feeling of loneliness and abandonment. The senior remains alone and often needs the help of his family, which helps him overcome and make this period of life more pleasant. This condition can worsen if various health problems are combined, for which the senior cannot provide for the basic needs of life. Adverse health status is also one of the stressful situations in the senior period, but here it is necessary to be able to accept this condition, adapt and believe that it can be managed. Here, too, the family has a very important role, which supports the sick senior, and at the same time gives him energy and hope that everything can be overcome and managed. Relationships in the family, which should be based on love, understanding, understanding and mutual help, depend on the attitude of the senior as well as the family towards emerging situations. Relationships in the family are also largely affected by the busyness of the family of the senior, who feels lonely and disinterested even though he does not live alone. Here, a nursing service, which provides care for the elderly and is also a help for the family, proves to be a suitable alternative and help for the family.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The paper is the output of the project APVV-22-0204: *Religiozita a Hodnoty Trvalej Udržateľnosti* (Religiosity and Values of Permanent Sustainability) and the Cultural and Educational Grant Agency (KEGA) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic based on the project *Inovácie v Študijnom Programe Probačná a Mediačná Práca Formou E-Technológií* (Innovations in the Study Program Probation and Mediation Work in the Form of E-Technologies) 043PU-4/2022.

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