

**Social isolation as a structural condition of elderly loneliness in modern urban societies: Evidence from Novosibirsk, Russia and Lagos, Nigeria.**

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The rapid ageing of the population and the expansion of large cities have intensified the problem of loneliness among older adults, transforming it into a significant social issue of modern urban societies. Global population ageing has become one of the most significant demographic transformations of the 21st century, raising new social and institutional challenges related to the well-being and inclusion of older adults [1]. In this context, loneliness should be considered not only as an individual emotional state but also as a socially conditioned phenomenon shaped by urban environments. Social isolation refers to the objective absence or scarcity of social contacts and interactions, which may lead to reduced social support and integration in later life [2].

The aim of this study is to analyse social isolation as a structural condition of elderly loneliness in modern urban societies using the examples of Novosibirsk (Russia) and Lagos (Nigeria). The methodological basis of the research is a qualitative approach, including expert interviews with specialists working directly with older adults: a gerontologist and head of a daily care facility in Lagos and a representative of the long-term care system at the Novosibirsk State Gerontology Centre. The analytical focus was placed on the assessment of the severity of loneliness, its global nature, the relationship between loneliness and social isolation, and future trends in ageing urban populations.

The analysis of expert interviews demonstrates that loneliness among elderly people is perceived as an acute and growing social problem in both countries. The Nigerian expert emphasised that modernisation, youth migration, and the decline of extended family support systems significantly reduce everyday interaction with older adults, increasing their vulnerability to isolation. Similarly, the Russian expert noted that a considerable proportion of elderly individuals receiving social services experience persistent loneliness, especially those living alone in urban apartments. These findings confirm that loneliness is not limited to a specific national context but reflects broader processes characteristic of contemporary urban society [4].

A key result of the study is the identification of social isolation as a primary structural condition of loneliness in old age. According to the experts, retirement, reduced mobility, loss of social roles, and shrinking communication networks lead to gradual social withdrawal. In large cities, the spatial organisation of housing, weak neighbourhood ties, and formalised social interactions further limit opportunities for meaningful communication. Thus, loneliness emerges as a consequence of objective social isolation rather than solely psychological factors.

The experts also highlighted that the problem is likely to intensify in the future due to ongoing urbanisation and demographic ageing. In Lagos, rapid urban growth and migration of younger family members abroad weaken intergenerational support, while in Novosibirsk the ageing population and institutional care expansion indicate a growing need for organised social support systems. Despite cultural differences, both urban contexts demonstrate similar structural mechanisms producing isolation in later life.

In conclusion, the study confirms that social isolation functions as a structural condition of elderly loneliness in modern urban societies. The comparative expert evidence from Novosibirsk

and Lagos shows that urban living, demographic ageing, and transformation of social networks collectively shape the experience of loneliness in old age, requiring integrated social and institutional interventions aimed at strengthening social inclusion of older adults [3].

#### **Источники и литература**

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