

Differential impact of intergenerational support on urban and rural older adults' life satisfaction in China

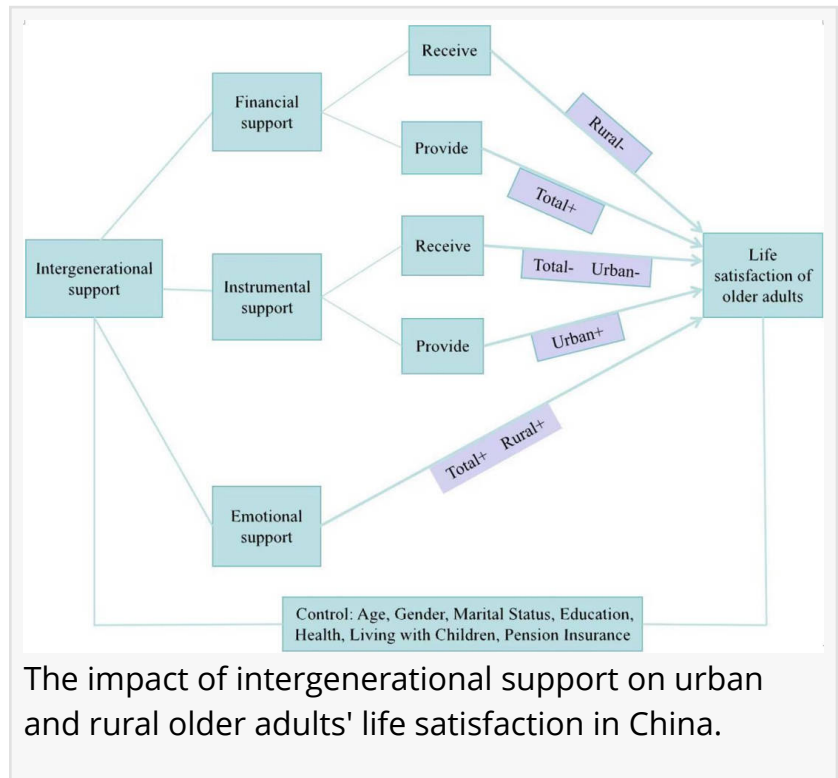
GA, UNITED STATES, April 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Various types of intergenerational support was differentially associated with older adults' satisfaction, with significant disparities between living in a rural or urban area.

The rise in the aging population is occurring worldwide. In China, with rapid economic and social changes, the family structure and pension mode for older adults have substantially changed. In turn, the status and role of intergenerational support in family pensions have also been modified.

In a study published in *Healthcare and Rehabilitation*, a team of researchers explored the current impact of intergenerational support on the life satisfaction of older adults in China. They analyzed 7,825 individuals from the 2018 China Longitudinal Aging Social Survey ([CLASS](#)) for the study.

"Intergenerational support is an essential informal form of social support that refers to the exchange of resources between children and their parents within the family," explains lead author Jie Zhang. "They are usually divided into financial, instrumental (e.g., life care, household tasks), and emotional support.

Life satisfaction is an individual's overall subjective evaluation of life and constitutes a key dimension of subjective well-being, and is an essential component of the psychological health and well-being of older adults. Given the influence of the dual urban-rural structure, a large gap exists in the level of economic development and cultural traditions between urban and rural areas, and differences in lifestyles and pension concepts are also present.



In particular, the researchers found that urban older adults' life satisfaction is higher than their counterparts in rural areas, and the influence of intergenerational support on life satisfaction differs between urban and rural areas.

"Rural older adults who receive financial support have lower life satisfaction, whereas the receipt of emotional support was positively related to life satisfaction," says Zhang. "Life satisfaction among urban older adults was influenced only by instrumental support, the less instrumental support older adults receive and the more instrumental support they provide, the higher their life satisfaction.

In other words, the positive impact of intergenerational support on older adults may no longer involve simple reciprocity or feedback but rather more altruistic characteristics and the pursuit of higher-level needs, such as love, respect, and self-actualization.

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Lucy Wang

BioDesign Research

+ +86 177 0518 5080

[email us here](#)

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