

Abstract

Objectives

Our paper highlights areas of interest to psychologists studying aging in Africa and what has already been learned about aspects of psychological aging from studies done in the African context. We also considered whether there are issues that are unique about aging in the African context that might challenge how aging is typically considered in psychology research.

Methods

We reviewed articles recently published in major gerontology journals focusing on African older adults, with the goal of identifying key themes of current geropsychology in Africa.

Results

We identified a number of dominant themes including: subjective aging, psychosocial impact of widowhood at old age, aging in place, stress and caregiving, cognitive aging, interrelations between HIV and aging, and successful aging.

Discussion

The themes of psychological aging research identified as especially relevant in Africa provide a starting point for psychological aging researchers in general to engage with the African context. Many African countries may be facing common challenges, but the existing studies are not fully representative of the aging population in the continent. Creating a framework for organizing and coordinating funding will help to address the limited research on geropsychology in Africa. Collaborative research projects/programs, joint classrooms, and fellowships that support African geropsychology scholars will be helpful. Geropsychology will benefit from more engagement with the African context by applying innovative approaches such as the adoption of longitudinal designs, mixed-method research, Experience Sampling Methods, translation of measures into indigenous languages, involvement of rural samples, and implementation science and community-engaged research.