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The Difference in Physical Health Between High-Income and Low-Income Populations in Tennessee

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Good overall physical health can be a protective factor against cognitive decline in aging. A good diet, routine exercise, and mindfulness to personal mental health are three main aspects that help determine one's overall well-being. Socioeconomic status may play a factor in the ability to have access to resources for all three aspects of overall health previously stated. This data is important because it may impact how future researchers go about finding ways to help underprivileged communities. This study aimed to report significant factors that contribute to physical health in relation to cognitive aging from studying six different counties throughout the state of Tennessee. We obtained this data from mySidewalk which is a platform that helps organize and share data to the general public. This study consisted of residents of the highest and lowest average income counties. The low-income counties consisted of Jackson County, Clay County, and Hancock County while the high-income counties consisted of Williamson County, Davidson County, and Wilson County. We measured three variables in this study which consisted of seniors one-mile urban or ten-miles rural with low access to healthy food in ages 65 and older, poor mental health, and no leisure-time physical activity among adults. We hypothesized people with poor physical health in relation to aging tend to face issues with cognitive functioning and found that our hypothesis was supported. Poor mental health was the only variable that did not show significant difference between the high- and low-income counties. Our analysis revealed that lower income populations may lack in fields including but limited not limited to transportation, lack of stores in the area, and lack of adequate time to go grocery shopping. This contributes to why there is a disparity in cognitive decline in relation to aging between high- and low-income populations in Tennessee.