

Seniors' Health in the GTA: How Immigration, Language, and Racialization Impact Seniors' Health

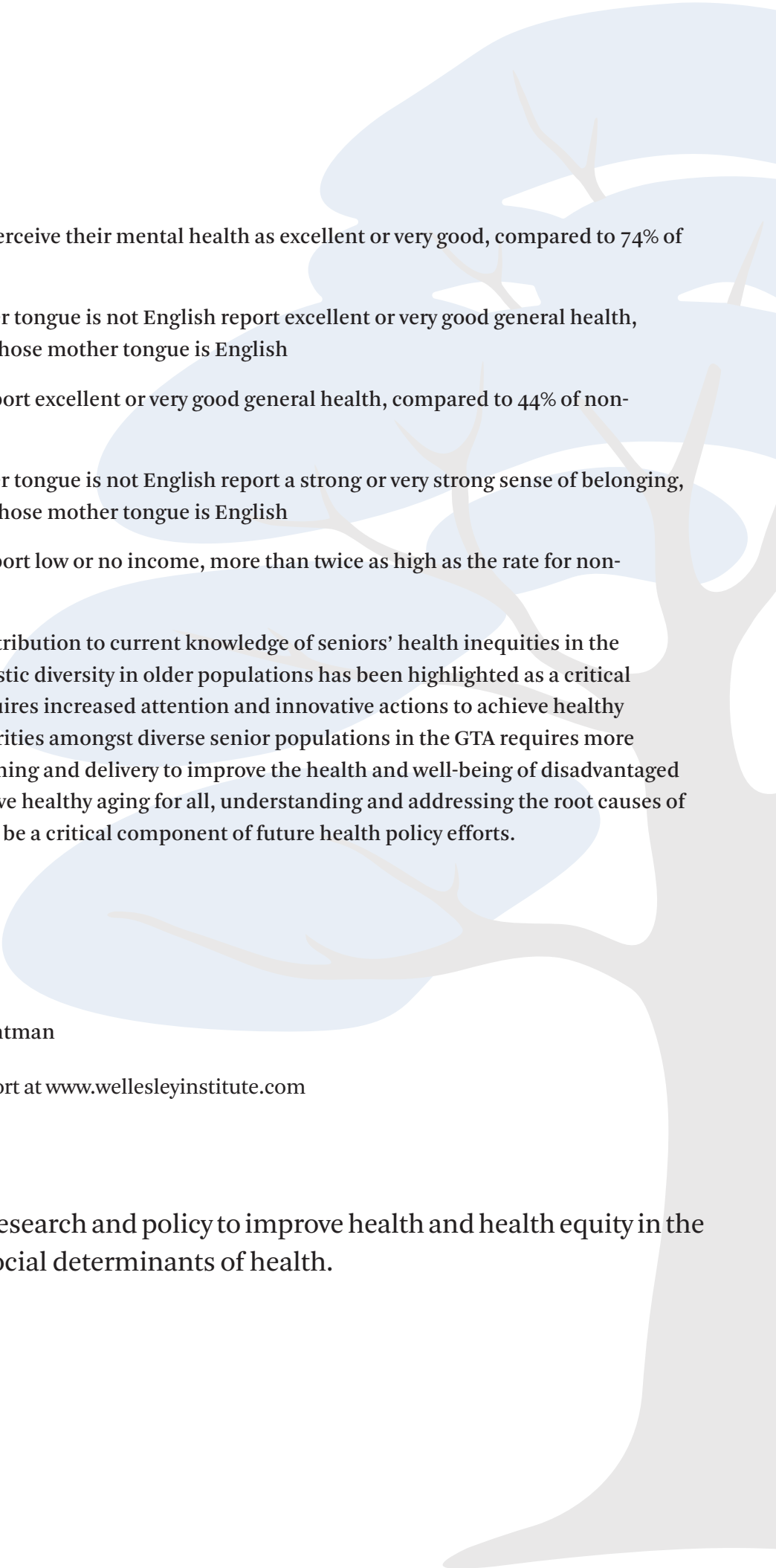
Executive Summary

The growing ethnic and linguistic diversity amongst senior populations has been well documented within Canada overall, and specifically within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Healthy aging is what we all desire, but how we age in the GTA is not the same for everyone. Some face greater health challenges than others as they age, and this in turn impacts how they perceive their health. What's more is that senior's self-reported health varies widely when accounting for selected diversity variables including immigration, length of time since immigration, mother tongue, and racialized identity.

This work investigates the impact of immigration, language, and racialized identity on social determinants of health (SDOH) outcomes like income, education, employment, sense of belonging to local community, and health care access as well as self-reported health and mental health across ethnically and linguistically diverse senior populations in the GTA. Our analyses of the Canadian Community Health Survey data revealed significant disparities in seniors' health across a number of factors. In addition, we identify groups that experience the greatest health disadvantages – recent immigrant seniors, those whose mother tongue is not English, and racialized seniors.

Key findings include that:

- Nearly two in three seniors in the GTA are immigrants (either long-term, mid-term or recent), and more recent immigrant seniors are mainly from racialized and linguistically diverse groups: 82% of recent immigrant seniors who have lived in Canada for 20 years or less are racialized seniors and 88% report a non-English mother tongue
- Only 27% of recent immigrant seniors perceive their general health as excellent or very good, compared to 52% of non-immigrant seniors

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- 53% of recent immigrants perceive their mental health as excellent or very good, compared to 74% of non-immigrant seniors
 - 30% of seniors whose mother tongue is not English report excellent or very good general health, compared to 49% of seniors whose mother tongue is English
 - 30% of racialized seniors report excellent or very good general health, compared to 44% of non-racialized seniors
 - 67% of seniors whose mother tongue is not English report a strong or very strong sense of belonging, compared to 75% of seniors whose mother tongue is English
 - 15% of racialized seniors report low or no income, more than twice as high as the rate for non-racialized seniors

This report offers an important contribution to current knowledge of seniors' health inequities in the GTA. The growing ethnic and linguistic diversity in older populations has been highlighted as a critical area of research and policy that requires increased attention and innovative actions to achieve healthy aging for all. Reducing health disparities amongst diverse senior populations in the GTA requires more targeted approaches in service planning and delivery to improve the health and well-being of disadvantaged population groups. As well, to achieve healthy aging for all, understanding and addressing the root causes of health and health inequities should be a critical component of future health policy efforts.

Authors: Seong-gee Um, Naomi Lightman

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Wellesley Institute works in research and policy to improve health and health equity in the GTA through action on the social determinants of health.