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# Going Solo: Exploring the intimate and broader Relationships of older single women without children and the implications for their support needs in later life

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**Who are SOLO woman? We have defined these as women over 55 years who are non-partnered and have never had children. living in the UK .**

## The design of our study has 3 elements

**Demographic and STATISTICAL analysis**  
 We have attempted to isolate this population within the Household Panel data.

An online **SURVEY** using purposive sampling and self-selecting inclusion criteria to identify and capture some of the key characteristics of solo women as well as to consult them about the key research questions that they consider should be pursued further.

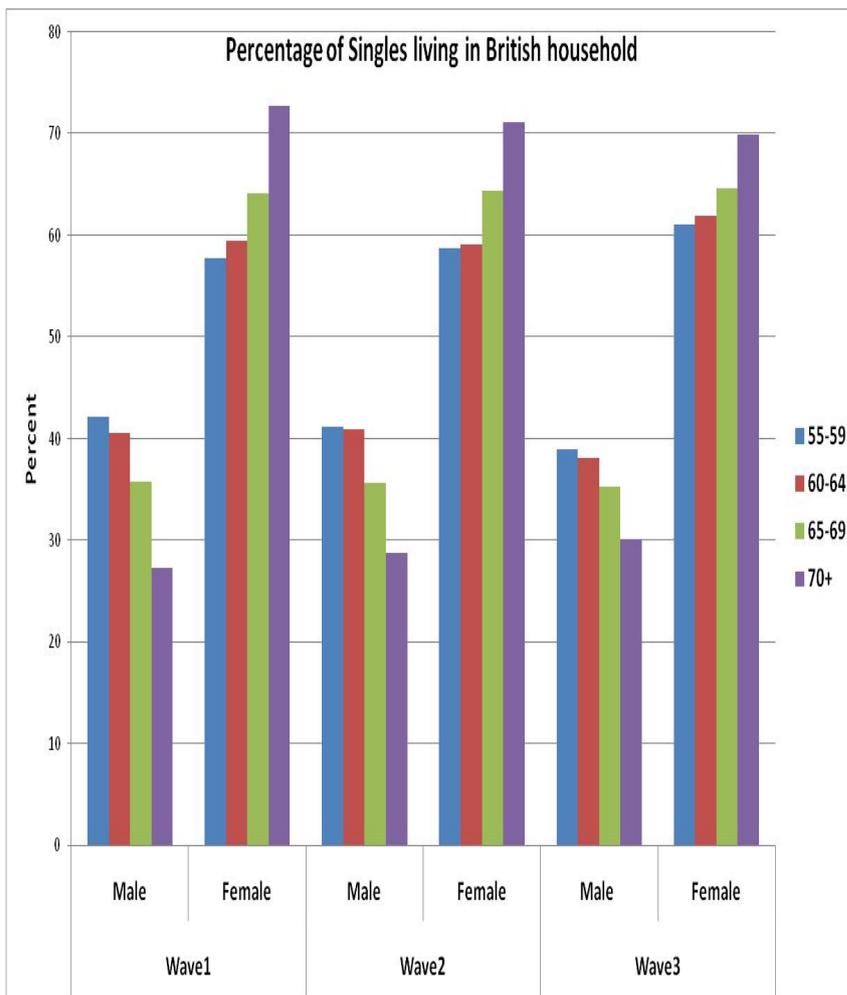
The final stage of the scoping study will involve face to face individual **INTERVIEWS** from those volunteering in the online survey and gathering qualitative data on the issues and experiences of those solo women and through outreach work into harder to access communities of women where solo women are not easily identified or do not accessing social media and technology.



**This poster reports on initial findings from a one aspect of a scoping study into factors which impact on successful ageing for Solo women. The research evidence is sparse on the life trajectories of non-partnered women without children as they grow older in post-modern UK society. We outline our approach to identifying what is known about this potentially growing and significant group with modern society in order to identify relevant future research questions and methods that will enable further enquiry in relation the meeting their future needs.**

Element 1 of our study is reporting on an interim statistical analysis using 'Understanding Society' British Household Panel Survey which has enabled us to consider the demographic trends of women living alone as they get older. We are using this data to examine how far society is able to ascertain the trends specifically in relation to 'SOLO' women and the potential different 'positions' occupied by this group through the examination of different variables as measured in the survey. Combined with a review of the literature and the outcomes from the survey, interim analyses of demographic trends and variables to develop more targeted key research questions needed for further investigation of SOLO women's ageing.

This table shows some characteristics of solo women **without children** (source: Understanding Society data - wave 3). There were 3830 solo women without any children (7.7percent) out of total 49,739 of women over 55 living alone.



Characteristics	Number of cases	Percent	Chi-Squared Test
<b>Belong to social website:</b>			
Yes	389	10.5	P<0.000
No	3314	89.5	
<b>General health:</b>			P<0.000
Excellent	300	7.8	
Very good	934	24.4	
Good	1009	26.4	
Fair	1020	26.6	
Poor	566	14.8	
<b>Long-standing illness/disability:</b>			P<0.000
Yes	2403	62.8	
No	1423	37.2	
<b>Non-residents cared for:</b>			P<0.062
Yes	514	13.9	
No	3189	86.1	
<b>Cohabitation spells:</b>			P<0.000
Yes	2	0.1	
No	3649	99.9	
<b>Sexual orientation:</b>			P<0.000
Heterosexual or straight	2836	93.6	
Gay or lesbian	9	0.3	
Bisexual	9	0.3	
Other	32	1.1	
<b>Place of residence:</b>			P<0.027
Urban	2850	74.4	
Rural	979	25.6	
<b>General happiness:</b>			P<0.000
More than usual	193	6.4	
About the same as usual	2450	80.7	
Less so than usual	314	10.3	
More less than usual	78	2.6	
<b>How manage financially:</b>			P<0.000
Living comfortably	1070	29.0	
Doing alright	1263	34.2	
Just about getting by	1013	27.5	
Finding it difficult	344	9.3	



Notes: Definition of 'Singles' – Living alone in the household. Adults are interviewed every 12 months either face-to-face or over the phone using Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI). Wave 1 – 3 Nov 2009 – Nov 2012