

The background of the slide features a large, faint, circular seal of Rutgers University. The seal contains the text 'RUTGERS UNIVERSITY' and 'THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY' around its perimeter. The seal is centered and overlaps with the main title text.

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“Gender Differences in Romantic Involvement and Desires Among Older African Americans”

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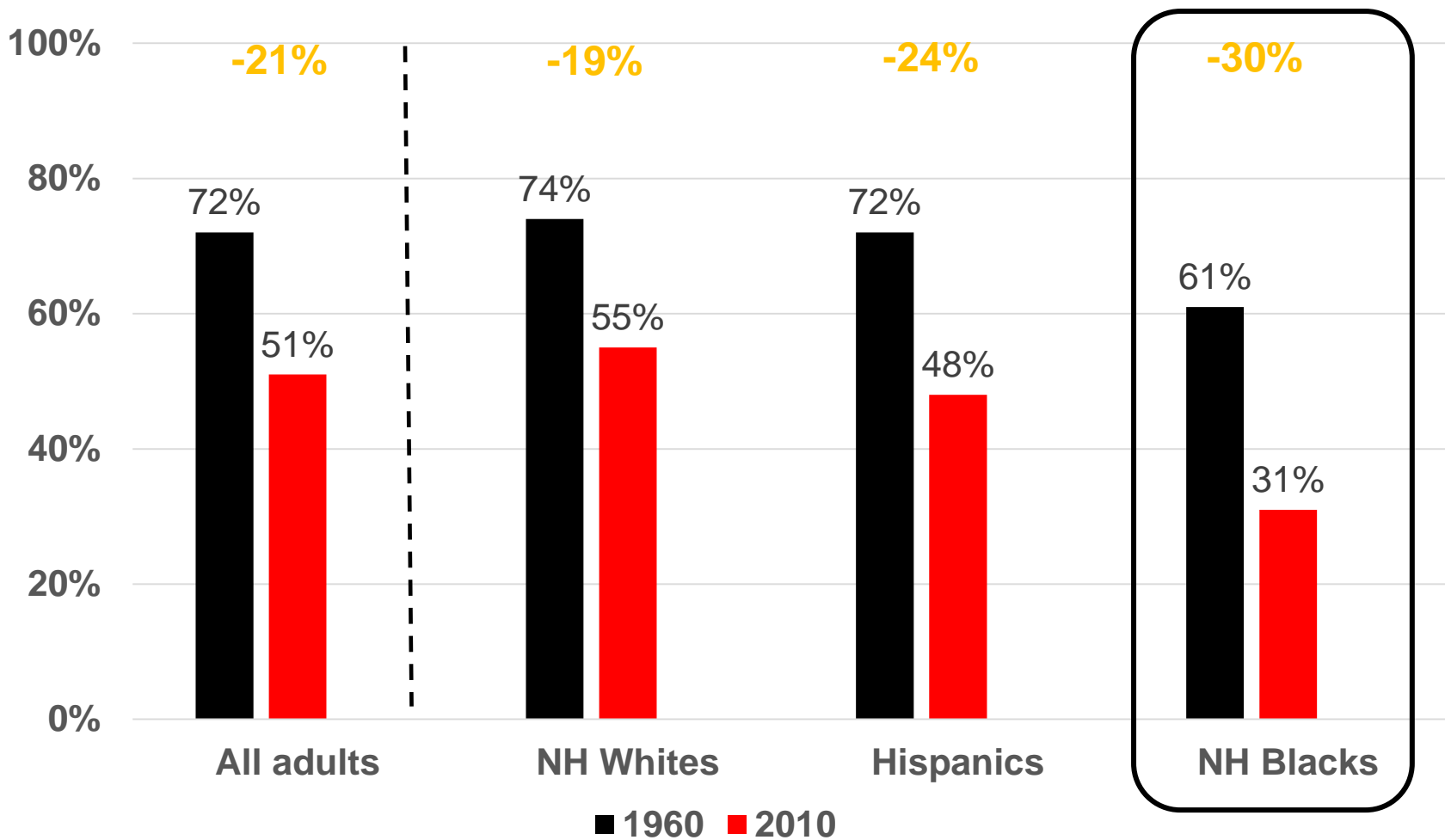
University of Michigan

Acknowledgments

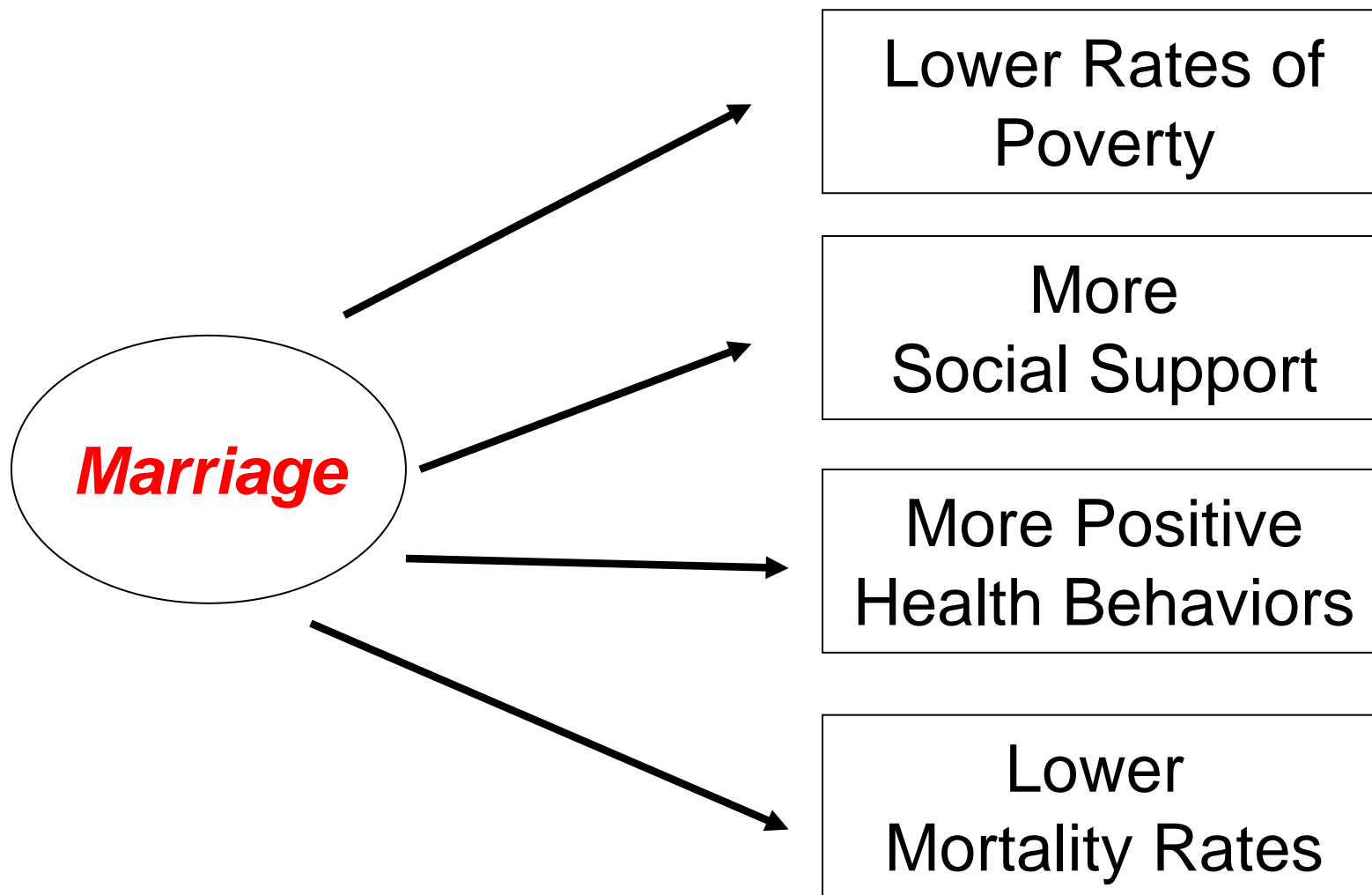


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Marriage Decline Between 1960 and 2010, Overall and by Race and Hispanic Origin



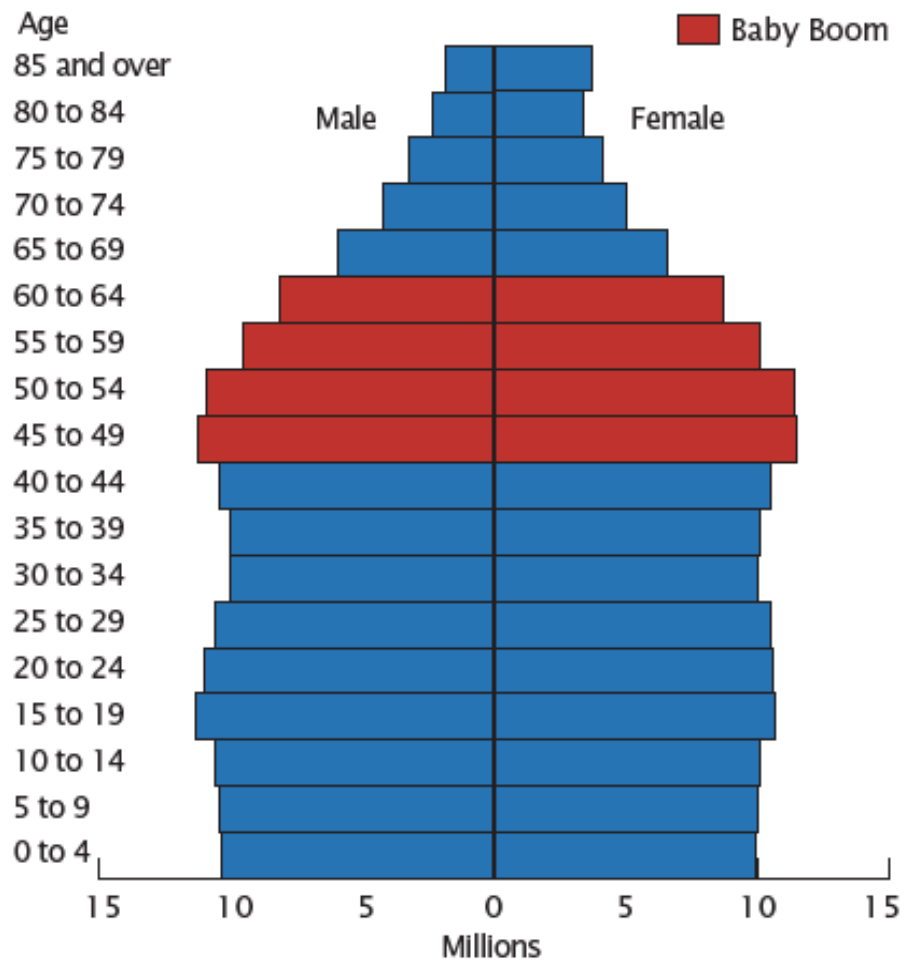
Causal Pathways: Benefits of Marriage



Why Marriage Matters for Older Adults

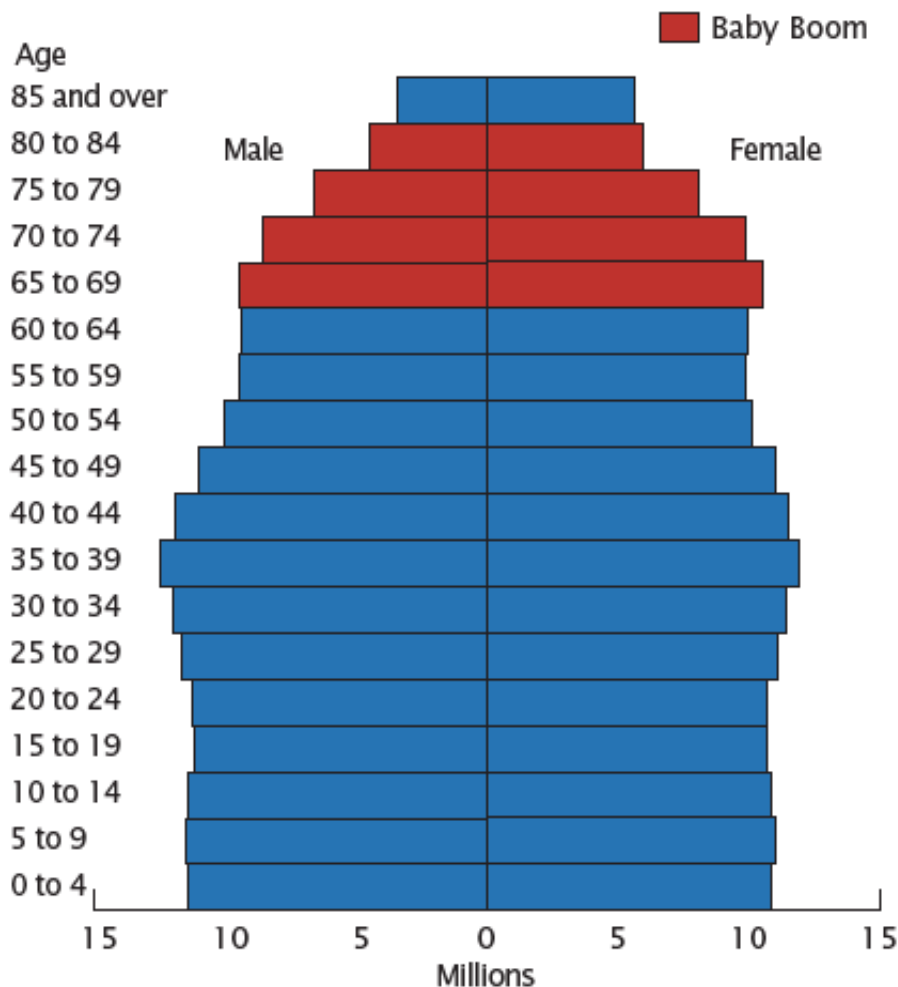
- Married older adults are less likely to live alone
- Older adults who live alone:
 - More than twice as likely to lack the money to meet basic expenses (12% vs. 5%)
 - Three times as likely to live in poverty (6.5% vs. 17.3%)
 - Less likely to spend time with family
 - More likely to enter nursing homes*
- The importance of gender:
 - Older women are almost 2x more likely to live alone (32% vs. 18%)

Figure 1-7.
Population by Age and Sex: 2010
 (For information on confidentiality protection,
 nonsampling error, and definitions, see
www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf)



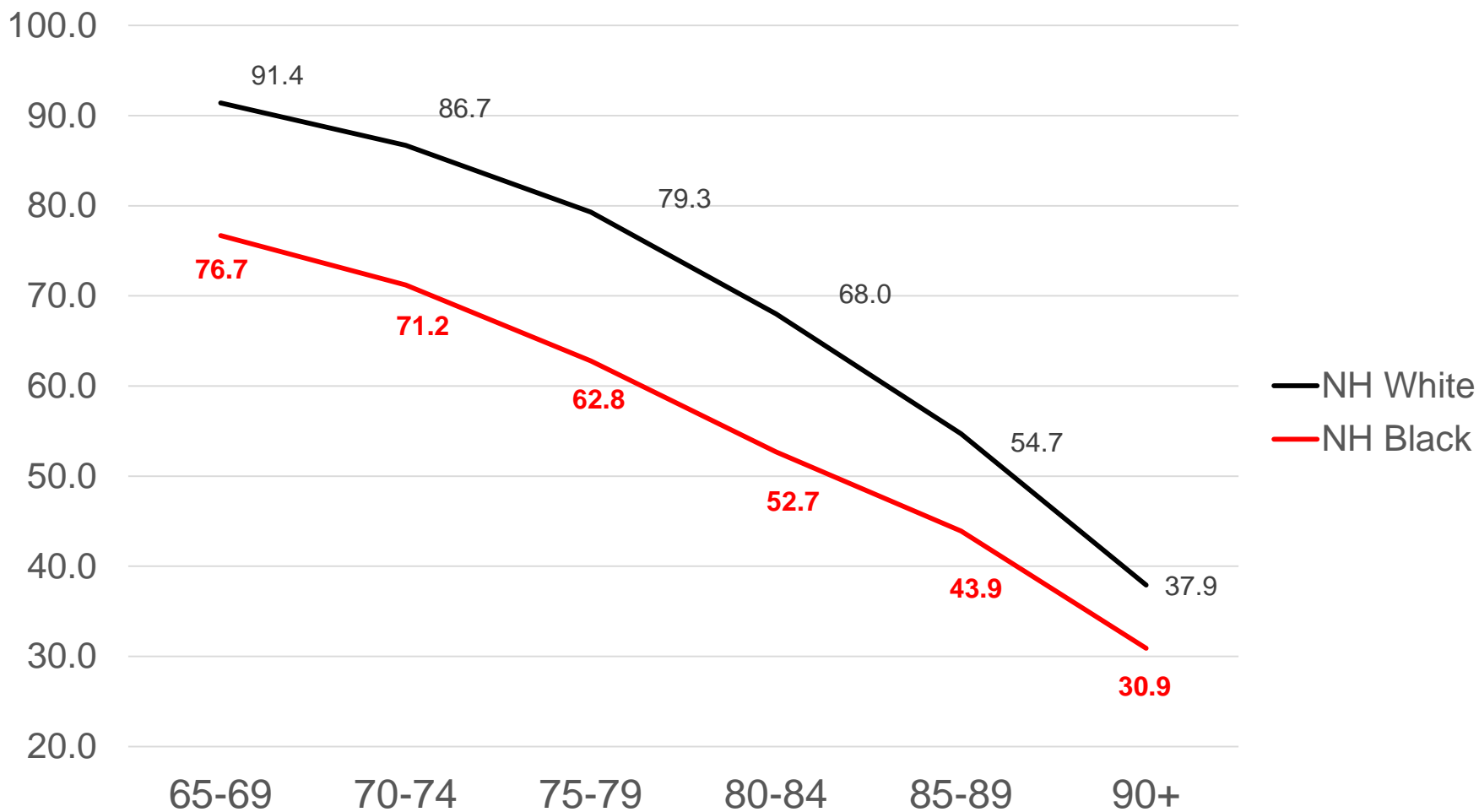
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; 2010 Census.

Figure 1-8.
Population by Age and Sex: 2030



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a; 2012 National Population Projections, Middle series.

Sex Ratio (Men : Women), by Race/Hispanic Origin and Age, 2010



Current State of Marriage and Family Research Literature

- Developmental stages of the literature:
 - Married vs. unmarried (1950s-1990s)
 - Married vs. (previously married vs. never married; 1990s-present)
 - Addition of cohabitation and marital quality (early 2000s-present)
- Gaps in aging literature
 - Race is often treated as a covariate
 - Little consideration of specific patterns among older African Americans
 - Marital status often treated as a covariate, rarely as an outcome

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Gaps in the Marriage and Dating Literature

- Very little research on non-cohabiting/non-marital romantic unions
- Marital/romantic involvement status measures rarely simultaneously consider *desires*
- Many studies focus on college-aged or adults in their 20s/30s
 - Relatively little quantitative information on dating among older adults
 - Older adult samples often based on nursing home residents

Data and Methods

- 2001-2003 National Survey of American Life (NSAL)
- Multistage probability sampling across the U.S.
 - Nationally representative samples of African Americans and Black Caribbeans
- Topics: psychological distress and mental disorders; neighborhoods; family structure and processes; religion, health, and work
- Analyses using SAS 9.13 and Stata 13.0
- Focus on older subsample of African Americans
 - 55 and older ($N = 837$)

Dependent Variable:

Romantic Involvement/Desire

- Based on 2-3 measures
 1. Marital status
 - married/cohabiting, previously married (separated, divorced, or widowed), never married
 2. Those who were not currently married/cohabiting were asked, *“Do you have a main romantic involvement at this time?”*
 3. Those who responded “no” were then asked, *“Do you want a main romantic involvement?”*
- Resulted in a four-category outcome:
 - 1=currenty married (38.7%) or cohabiting (1.4%)
 - 2=has a (non-cohabiting) main romantic involvement (11.0%)
 - 3=unpartnered but desire a romantic relationship (9.7%)
 - 4=unpartnered but does not desire a romantic relationship (39.2%)

Control Variables

- Gender
- Age in years
- Educational attainment in years
- Family income (\$)
- Region (Northeast, North Central, West, South)
- 12-month material hardship ($\alpha = 0.76$):
 - Difficulty meeting basic expenses
 - Difficulty paying full rent or mortgage
 - Difficulty paying full utilities
 - Ever had utilities disconnected, had telephone disconnected
 - Evicted for non-payment
 - Could not afford leisure activities
- Self-rated physical health (1/poor \rightarrow 5/excellent)
- Self-rated dental health (1/poor \rightarrow 5/excellent)

Analytic Strategy

- Multinomial logistic regression to predict *romantic involvement/desire*
- Three contrasts between four distinct groups:
 - Married/cohabiting (ref) vs. romantically involved
 - Married/cohabiting (ref) vs. unpartnered but desire a main RI
 - Married/cohabiting (ref) vs. unpartnered but does not desire a main RI
- Data were weighted and adjusted for complex survey design
- Relative risk ratios (RRR) and 95% CI are reported

Weighted Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis of Demographic and Self-Rated Health Variables and Romantic Involvement Among Older African Americans, National Survey of American Life (N = 837)

	Romantically Involved (vs. Married/Cohabit)
	Model 1
	RRR (95% C.I.)
Gender	
Male	1.00
Female	1.41 (0.83,2.42)
Age	0.98 (0.94,1.01)
Family Income	0.91 (0.85,0.98)*
Education	0.97 (0.89,1.06)
Region	
Northeast	2.32 (1.04,5.22)*
North Central	2.94 (1.54,5.60)**
South	1.00
West	2.21 (1.12,4.35)*
Material Hardship	1.09 (0.81,1.46)
Self-Rated Health	1.26 (0.92,1.74)
Self-Rated Oral Health	0.82 (0.63,1.07)

- Higher family income = less likely to have a romantic involvement vs. married/cohabiting
- Residents of the Northeast, North Central, and West = more likely to have a romantic involvement
 - vs. Southerners = more likely to be married/cohabiting

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Weighted Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis of Demographic and Self-Rated Health Variables and Romantic Involvement Among Older African Americans, National Survey of American Life (N = 837)

	Desire Romantic Involvement (vs. Married/Cohabit)
	Model 2
	RRR (95% C.I.)
Gender	
Male	1.00
Female	2.48 (1.37,4.48)**
Age	0.94 (0.90,0.99)*
Family Income	0.87 (0.79,0.95)**
Education	1.08 (0.94,1.25)
Region	
Northeast	1.97 (0.54,7.25)
North Central	3.24 (1.67,6.28)**
South	1.00
West	1.00 (0.34,2.89)
Material Hardship	1.09 (0.83,1.43)
Self-Rated Health	1.13 (0.83,1.54)
Self-Rated Oral Health	0.84 (0.67,1.06)

- Women were more than twice as likely to desire a romantic involvement
 - vs. men = more likely to be married/cohabiting
- Older adults = less likely to desire RI
 - vs. younger adults = more likely to be married/cohabiting
- Higher family income = less likely to desire a main romantic involvement
- Residents of the North Central region = more likely to desire a RI
 - vs. Southerners = more likely to be married/cohabiting

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Weighted Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis of Demographic and Self-Rated Health Variables and Romantic Involvement Among Older African Americans, National Survey of American Life (N = 837)

	Neither Have Nor Desire Romantic Involvement (vs. Married/Cohabit)
	Model 3 RRR (95% C.I.)
Gender	
Male	1.00
Female	4.32 (3.01,6.20)***
Age	1.06 (1.04,1.09)***
Family Income	0.84 (0.77,0.92)***
Education	1.05 (0.95,1.16)
Region	
Northeast	1.37 (0.70,2.68)
North Central	1.35 (0.64,2.87)
South	1.00
West	0.93 (0.40,2.14)
Material Hardship	1.18 (0.92,1.51)
Self-Rated Health	0.94 (0.73,1.22)
Self-Rated Oral Health	0.88 (0.73,1.07)

- Women were more than 4x more likely to neither have nor desire a romantic involvement
 - vs. men = more likely to be married/cohabiting
- Older age = more likely than to neither have nor desire a romantic involvement (vs. married/cohabiting)
- Higher family income = less likely to neither have nor desire a romantic involvement

Conclusions

- Low marriage rates among Blacks do not necessarily indicate lack of romantic partnerships
 - 11% reported having a main romantic involvement
- Lack of romantic partnership is not necessarily involuntary
 - 40% married/cohabiting
 - 39% neither had nor desired a romantic involvement
- Higher income adults were most likely to be married/cohabiting

Conclusions

- Increasing age:
 - Lower likelihood of desiring a main romantic involvement
 - Higher likelihood of neither having nor desiring a main romantic involvement
 - Concerns about caregiving, especially for women
- Southerners more likely to be married/cohabiting
 - Northeast, North Central, West → more likely to have a main RI
 - North Central → more likely to desire a main RI

Conclusions: The Role of Gender

- Older African American women were:
 - more likely to desire a romantic involvement
 - more likely to neither have nor desire a romantic involvement
- Potential causes:
 - Fears of potential caregiving burden for older/sicker men
 - Increasingly skewed sex ratio among older African Americans
- Presence/level of romantic involvement and desires likely involves a combination of constraints and agency, especially for older African American women