

Kenyan Grandparents Study 2005

The high mortality rate of Africans with HIV/AIDS has produced approximately 11 million orphans, the care of which has largely been left to the elderly. As caregivers, elderly Africans who are vulnerable in their own right, are facing additional economic, physical, nutritional and psychosocial stressors. While several reports have suggested that the caregiving role is stressful for the elderly, few have systematically measured the stress or the factors which buffer against it. The PI's *long-range goal* is to understand the effects of multiple chronic stressors on the health of older Luo caregivers in Kenya. The development of a reliable and valid scale is a critical first step for this research. The *goal of this project* is to finish the development of the Luo Perceived Stress Scale (LPSS), a scale designed to measure the affective response to stress among the Luo of Western Kenya. This goal will be fulfilled by the following specific aims: 1) to create a revised scale to measure emotions among the Luo using culturally salient terms; 2) to examine the reliability and validity of the new LPSS; and 3) to examine the association between the LPSS and cortisol. The PI will employ a free-list and pile sort method to collect culturally salient expressions of emotion. This will allow us to collect any terms that were missing from the original scale as well as evaluate the salience of the terms previously identified. The LPSS will be revised and examined for reliability, validity and its association with cortisol with a random sample of 300 (half caregivers, half non-caregivers). The revised scale will be used in a subsequent more extensive project to examine the effects of the burden of caregiving on physiological markers of stress and health. Ultimately, by understanding sources of stress and the buffers against them, we can plan interventions to enable grandparents to cope more effectively in caring for orphaned grandchildren at home.