Uncovering Key Determinants of Well-Being among Older Canadian Retirees in New Brunswick: Protocol for a Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

Background: Canada's population is aging rapidly, and New Brunswick has one of the highest proportions of older adults nationally, with many residing in rural communities and experiencing precarious or non-unionized work histories. Retirement can profoundly affect well-being across multiple domains—physical, mental, social, financial, and spiritual—yet existing research often examines these dimensions in isolation, overlooking their interconnectedness.

Aim: This study aims to uncover the key determinants of well-being among older retirees in New Brunswick by applying a multidimensional, equity-informed lens. Specifically, it explores how sociodemographic, community, organizational, and societal factors interact to shape healthier, more fulfilling aging experiences.

Design and Methods: Guided by the Socio-Ecological Model, this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches. Phase I involves a cross-sectional survey of 600 retirees aged 65 years and older, recruited through senior centres and community organizations. Well-being will be measured using the WISE Scale (Well-being across Individual, Social, Economic, and Spiritual domains), a validated 51-item instrument adapted for the Canadian context. Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, subgroup analyses, and multiple regression in SPSS. Phase II will purposively sample 15–25 participants for semi-structured interviews, thematically analyzed in NVivo. Triangulation will integrate findings across phases, with data collection scheduled to begin in September 2025.

Expected Contributions: The study will generate robust, context-specific evidence on the determinants of retiree well-being, addressing critical gaps in Canadian aging research. By highlighting disparities related to gender, income, and rurality, the findings will inform tailored community programs, healthcare practices, and equitable policies.

Conclusion: This SSHRC-funded project will provide timely insights into how multiple layers of influence shape aging in New Brunswick and serve as a model for similar work across other provinces and international settings confronting the challenges and opportunities of population aging.

Keywords

Aging, retirees, mixed-methods, well-being, socio-ecological model, retirement.