

# Have Australians become more lonely and socially isolated?

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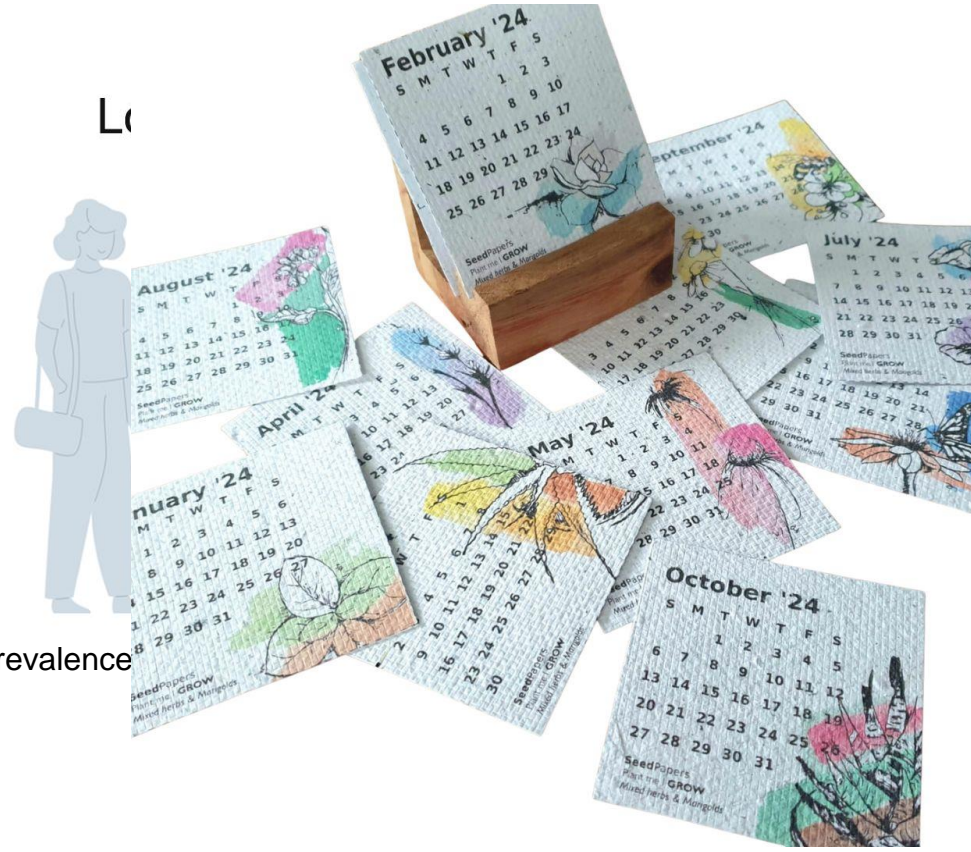
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# Definition: Loneliness and social isolation

Social isolation



Loneliness



Source of the image: <https://www.spd.org.sg/the-prevalence-social-isolation-for-persons-with-disabilities/>

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Have Australians become more socially isolated?



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# Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA)

- Nationally representative household longitudinal survey
- Annual follow-up since 2001
- Multi-stage random sampling of Australians aged 15+ years
- Top-up sample in 2021 to account for population change

# Measures

## - Loneliness:

- 'people don't come to visit me as often as I would like',
- 'I often need help from other people but can't get it'
- 'I often feel very lonely'

## - Social Isolation:

- marital status of the participant
- currently being an active member of a sporting, hobby, or community-based club or association
- the frequency of getting together socially with friends or relatives not living with the participants

**Episodic**

**Vs**

**Chronic**

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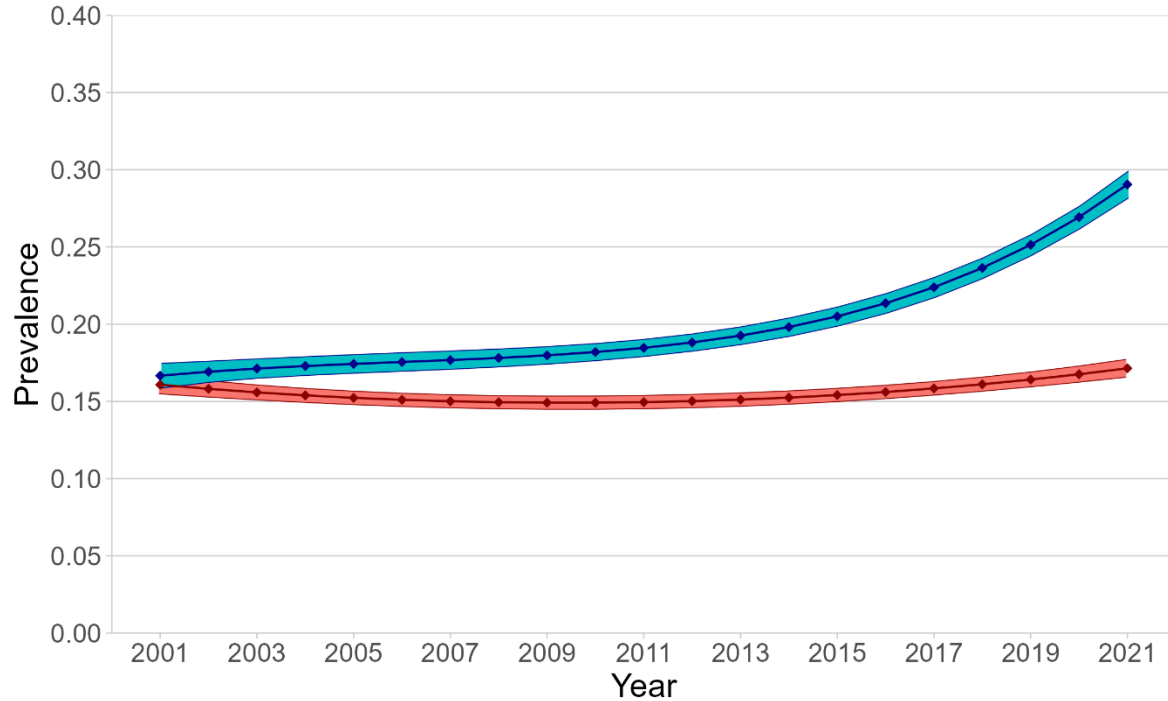
## Statistical analysis

- Pre-registered protocol: <https://osf.io/zjdg6/>
- Mixed-effects Poisson regression models
- Modeled 1) main effect of survey wave (continuously 2001-2021); and 2) wave × sociodemographic characteristics interactions
- Characteristics: **age, sex**, educational attainment, **country of birth**, **linguistic background**, marital status, living arrangement, home ownership status, employment status, remoteness



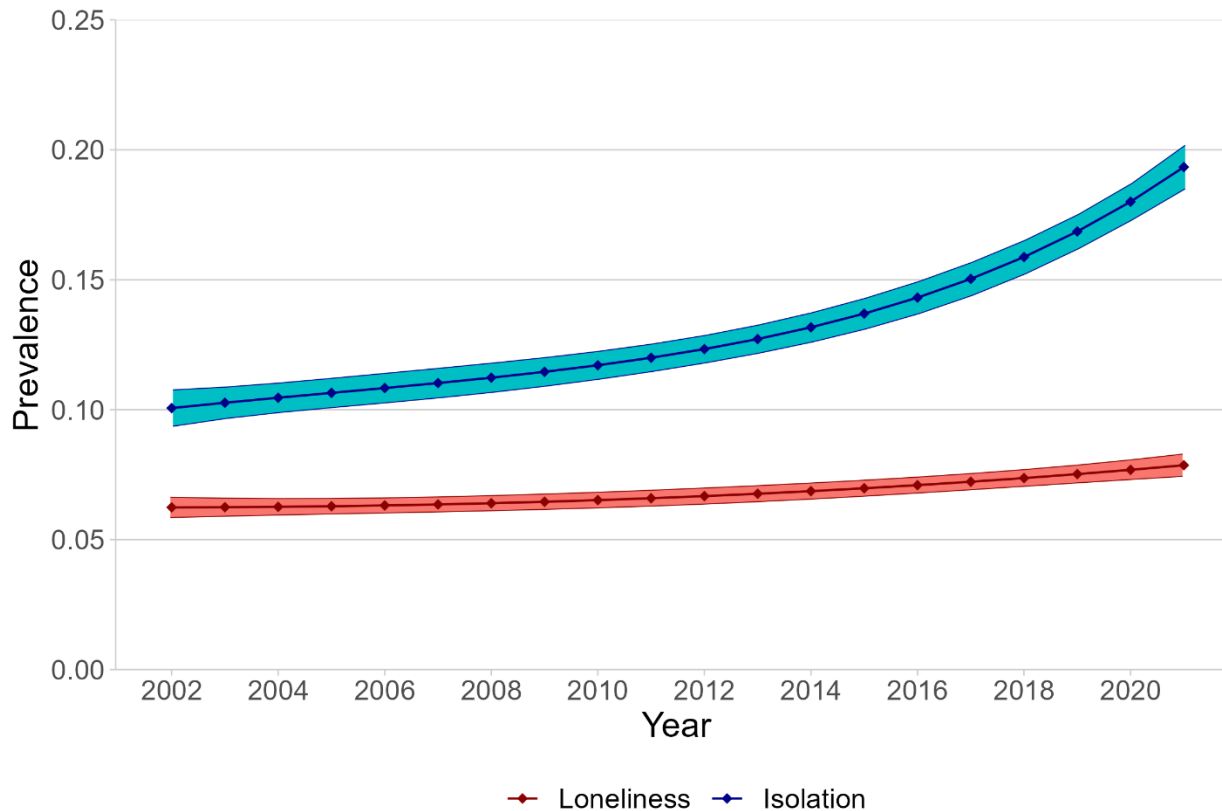
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## Results: Episodic loneliness and social isolation



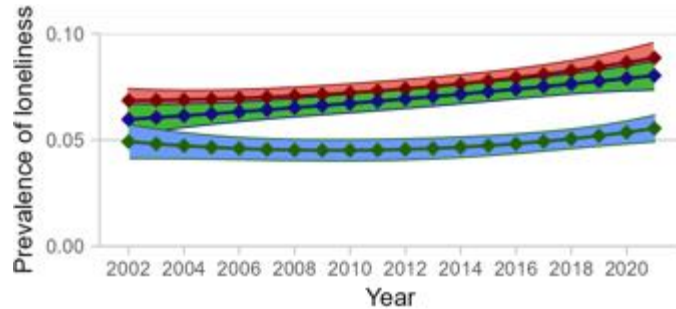
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## Results: Chronic loneliness and social isolation

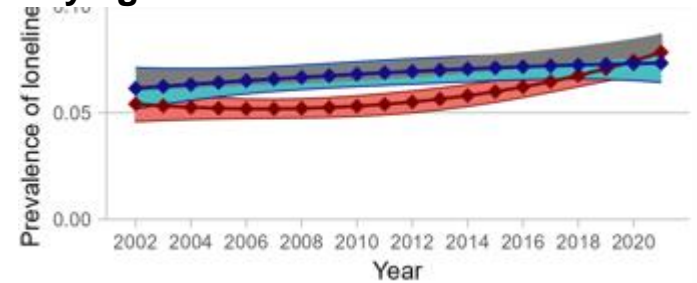


# Results: Chronic loneliness by subgroups (selected)

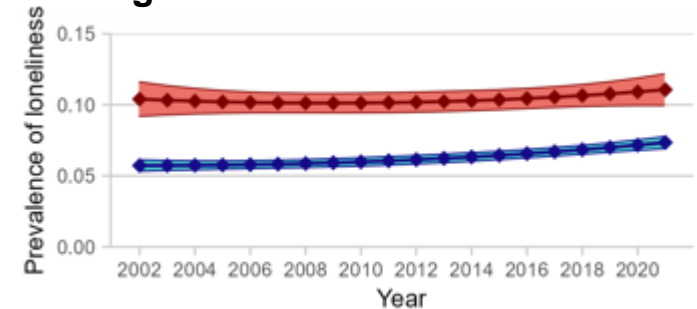
## By education



## By age



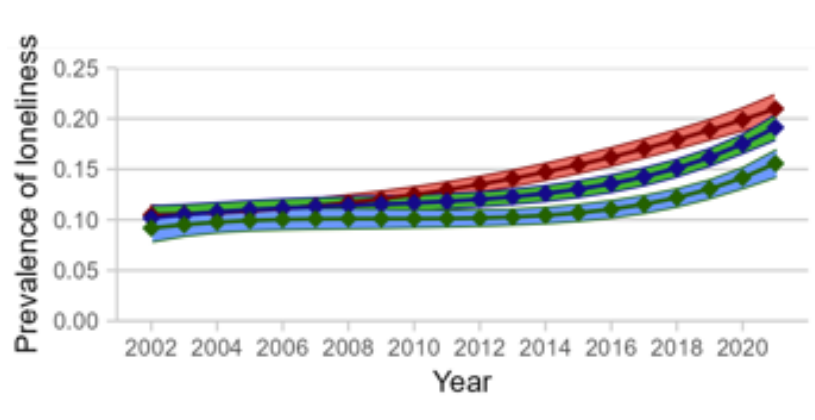
## By living arrangement



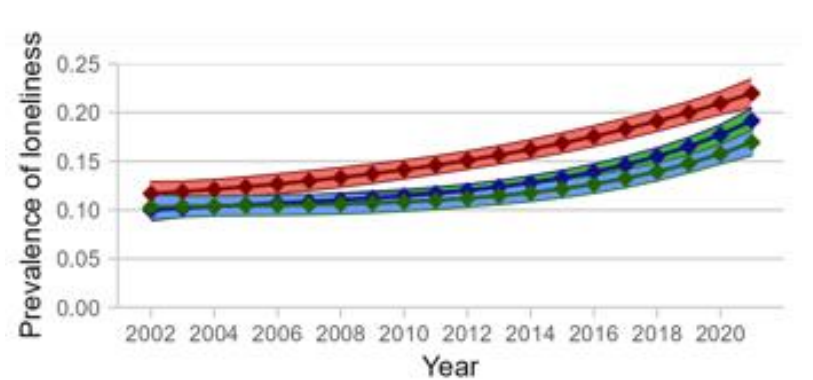
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## Results: Chronic loneliness by subgroups (selected)

### By education



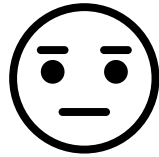
### Area-level deprivation



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## Conclusions

- Have Australians become lonelier 2001-2021?






- Have Australians become more socially isolated 2001-2021?



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## Implications for future research and practice

-  Understand what is driving increasing social isolation and its potential health consequences, especially in sociodemographic subgroups
-  Continuous monitoring of social connection (episodic and chronic)
-  Develop interventions and policies to reduce loneliness and social isolation at the population level



Thank you!

And oops, sorry!

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