

**A Community Needs Assessment of Older Adults in Kern County:
Socio-Economic/Health Indicators and Access to Services**

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Introduction: California has the highest number of older adults than other states, with a projection of 11,000,000 (age 65+) by 2050 (Miltiades & Flores, 2008). This presentation will describe findings of a community needs assessment of this growing population in Kern County. Social, economic, and health indicators, current need for services, as well as access will be described.

Method: This study was a collaborative effort among members of the Kern County Senior Collaborative, the Kern County Department of Aging and Adult Services (AAS), and the CSUB Department of Social Work. This was part of the county's periodic needs assessments that keep programming and services relevant. A subcommittee of the Senior Collaborative developed a questionnaire that was distributed by Collaborative members throughout the county. The questionnaire focused on demographics, social and health indicators, as well as knowledge and access to services. Over 800 questionnaires were returned. Data analyses were done on 656 of these responses. Descriptive statistics were used to provide a picture of this sample.

Results/Conclusions: Due to the large amount of data available, only the most salient results can be presented. A sample of results include: 51% of respondents lived alone, 32% were unable to cover monthly expenses, 39% reported their health as "poor" or "very poor," 37% reported substantive memory problems, 42% reported falling in the past year, 38% in this group required medical attention. Fifty-three reported they were aware of AAS services. The needs assessment provides a picture of the needs of older adults in Kern County as well as what services they are currently accessing.

Reference: Miltiades, H. and Flores, M. (2008). *Aging in the San Joaquin Valley: Present Realities and Future Prospects*. Fresno, CA: California State University, Fresno.