

Functioning and Mortality of Holocaust Survivors: Physical Resilience and Psychosocial Vulnerabilities

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine Shmotkin's model according to which older people who experienced trauma would commonly demonstrate a general, mainly physical, resilience coupled with specific, mainly psychosocial, vulnerabilities. Examining Holocaust survivors and comparisons drawn from two national samples of older Israelis (N = 477 and N = 210), survivors did not differ in physical health markers but showed lower functioning in psychosocial markers. Concentration camp survivors demonstrated a lower or a similar mortality risk compared to other groups depending on the sample. Our findings support Shmotkin's model and imply that elderly Holocaust survivors represent a select group with a remarkable biopsychosocial constitution.

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