

# LONELINESS AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF DEPRESSION

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## BACKGROUND

- Chronic disease self-management programs (CDSMPs) empower individuals to take an active role in their health management.
- Self-efficacy is an important construct determining self-management behaviors.
- Low self-reported ratings of self-efficacy for managing chronic disease have been associated with high loneliness ratings; however, other variables that may be important regarding the relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy are less well known.
- Depressive symptoms are associated with both loneliness and management of chronic disease.

## PURPOSE

- Investigate how baseline loneliness predicts baseline depressive symptoms and self-efficacy in a CDSMP.
- Determine if baseline depressive symptoms mediate the relationship between baseline loneliness and baseline self-efficacy.
- Assess whether baseline depressive symptoms mediate the effect of baseline loneliness on changes in self-efficacy from pre- to post-intervention.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Sample

- Participants ( $n = 48$ ;  $M = 63.0$  years old,  $SD = 18.0$ ) were predominately White ( $n = 47$ ; 97.8%) and female ( $n = 37$ ; 77%) who presented with at least one chronic condition and completed a CDSMP workshop.

### Procedure

- Data used in this study were from a larger battery of assessments designed to evaluate HealthyU, a chronic disease self-management program in Wyoming.
- Participants gave informed consent and completed demographic information.
- Baseline measures of loneliness, depressive symptoms, and self-efficacy were collected before starting the program. After the program ended, post-measures of the same outcomes were gathered.

## DATA ANALYSES

- Multiple regression analyses were used to examine the direct and mediating effects of baseline loneliness and depressive symptoms on baseline self-efficacy.
- Additionally, multiple regression analyses were used to assess the impact of baseline loneliness and depressive symptoms on changes in self-efficacy from pre- to post-intervention.
- Analyses were performed using SPSS, version 29.

## RESULTS

- Regression analyses revealed that baseline loneliness predicted baseline depressive symptoms ( $\beta = .49$ ,  $SE = .60$ ,  $p < .001$ ).
- Both baseline loneliness ( $\beta = -.46$ ,  $SE = .26$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and depressive symptoms ( $\beta = -.75$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ) predicted baseline self-efficacy.
- The relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy became non-significant ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $SE = .23$ ,  $p = .27$ ) after controlling for depressive symptoms (See Figure 1).
- Examination of loneliness and depression to change in self-efficacy pre- to post-intervention showed similar results (See Figure 2). The relationship between baseline loneliness and changes in self-efficacy became non-significant ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $SE = .21$ ,  $p = .30$ ) after controlling for baseline depressive symptoms.

Figure 1. Mediation Model of Baseline Loneliness, Depressive Symptoms, and Self-Efficacy ( $n = 48$ ).

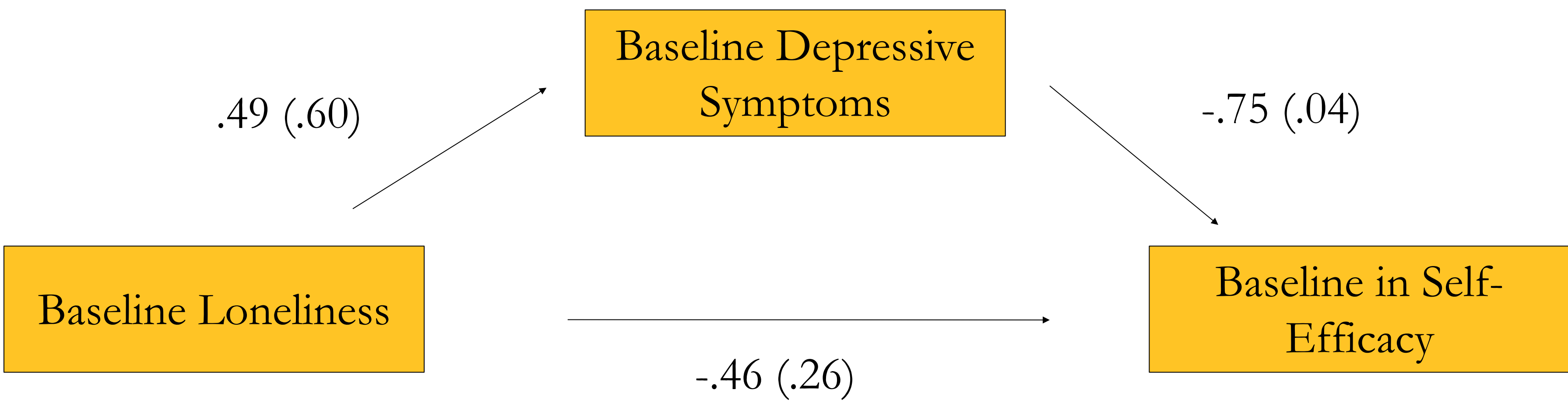
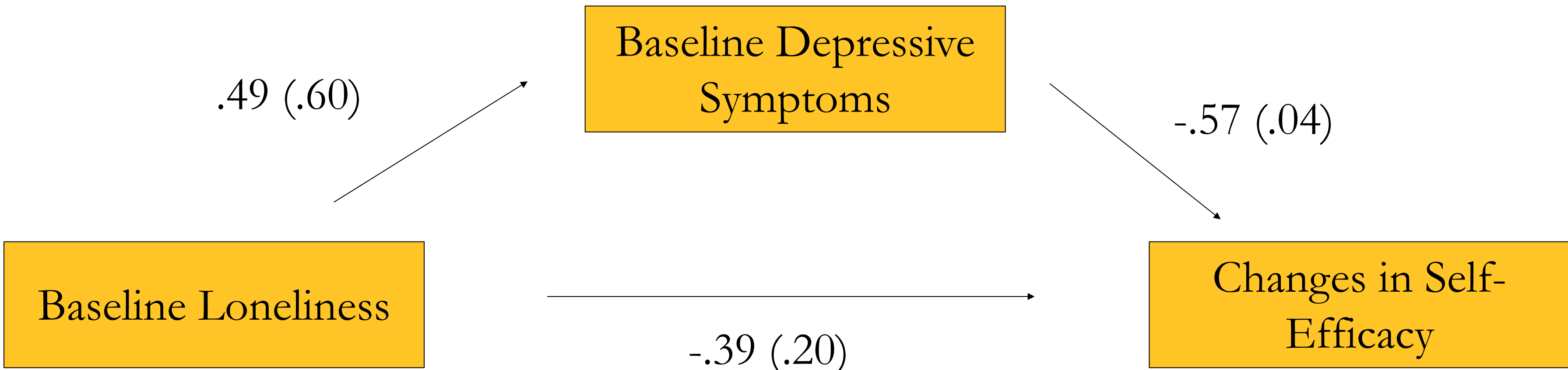


Figure 2. Mediation Model of Baseline Loneliness, Baseline Depressive Symptoms, and Changes in Self-Efficacy ( $n = 48$ ).



*Note.* Loneliness was assessed using a one-item measure from the AARP Loneliness and Social Connections Survey. Depressive symptoms were measured with the SMRC Personal Health Questionnaire Depression Scale. Self-efficacy was evaluated using the SMRC's 6-item Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Disease Scale.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Regression analyses reveal that baseline depressive symptoms play a role in the relationship between baseline loneliness and self-efficacy among participants in the CDSMP.
- Although loneliness initially predicted depressive symptoms and self-efficacy, the relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy became non-significant once depressive symptoms were controlled for.
- Similarly, changes in self-efficacy pre- to post-intervention showed that the effect of baseline loneliness on changes in self-efficacy was not significant when accounting for baseline depressive symptoms.
- Findings suggest that addressing depressive symptoms may enhance self-efficacy for individuals experiencing loneliness in the CDSMP.



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