INTRODUCTION

Older couples spend more time together, participate in more joint activities, and involve each other in more important decisions (Cowgill & Baulch, 1962).

Older couples prioritize close relationships (Carstensen, 1995), which may lead to greater relationship closeness and satisfaction compared to younger couples.

Emotional intelligence is positively related to relationship satisfaction (Malouff et al., 2014).

Research Questions
1. Are there age differences in relationship closeness?
2. Does age alter the extent to which couples' satisfaction correlate?
3. What socioemotional factors predict relationship satisfaction?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Older adults (OA) will have higher overall relationship closeness scores compared to younger adults (YA).

Hypothesis 2: Relationship satisfaction scores for young and older couples will be positively correlated between partners.

Hypothesis 3: Emotion perception accuracy and relationship closeness will be positively related to satisfaction.

METHODS

Participants
22 YA couples (18-30 yrs.) & 23 OA couples (60-91 yrs.)

Measures

Relationship Closeness
Relationship Closeness Inventory (RCI; Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1980)
58 items
Subscales: Frequency & Diversity

Relationship Satisfaction
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976)
32 Likert scale items
Subscale: Relationship Satisfaction
0-All the time, 5-Never

Emotion Perception
Identify emotions from dynamic videos of familiar partner and same-age stranger
Neutral Happy, Disgusted, Sad, Surprised, Afraid, Angry
Videos were blocked by partner condition and randomized by emotion

RESULTS

(1) Age Differences for Relationship Closeness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RCI Subscale</th>
<th>OA Marginal &gt; YA, t(82)</th>
<th>OA &gt; YA, t(82)</th>
<th>YA &gt; OA, t(82)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCI Total</td>
<td>1.85, p = .068</td>
<td>3.10, p = .003</td>
<td>3.70, p = .000</td>
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Note: Bars represent standard error of means

(2) The Moderating Effects of Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>OA &gt; YA, r(39)</th>
<th>YA &gt; OA, r(39)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Satisfaction</td>
<td>.708, p &lt; .001</td>
<td>.655, p &lt; .002</td>
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DISCUSSION

Age differences were found in the frequency with which couples interact but not in the diversity of activities. It is possible this difference is simply due to time available after job obligations (i.e., retired older adults may have more time to interact with a partner).

Interestingly, older adult relationship satisfaction was more dependent on one's partner's satisfaction than for young adult couples. Perhaps as relationships progress, couples become more interdependent and reliant on each other so one's own satisfaction is more likely to be influenced or derived from one's partner's satisfaction.

The initial predictors of relationship satisfaction were dyadic adjustment and emotion perception; however, later relationship satisfaction was related to familiar partner emotion perception, dyadic adjustment, and initial relationship satisfaction. This could suggest identifying emotions in one's partner is a stable predictor of relationship satisfaction.

These data suggest that aspects of the relationship (i.e., closeness) change depending on the age of the individuals and factors related to relationship satisfaction change over time. Future studies should investigate these relationship components in-depth, longitudinally.