

## How are Money Worries Affecting Older Couples' Relationships?

Woochul Park, University of Maryland<sup>1</sup>  
Jinhee Kim, University of Maryland<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Using the Health and Retirement Study, the present study found that financial strain affects older couples' functioning. Findings show that subjective financial strain was positively associated with partner undermining and negatively with partner support, controlling for objective financial strain. There were gender differences in the interaction effects of financial strain and financial control on couple functioning. Only for men, the effects of financial control on couple functioning vary depending upon the levels of financial strain that male partners are experiencing. Specifically, male partners' financial control is associated with couple behaviors in a positive way when their financial strain is low. However, when their financial strain is high, the positive effect of financial control disappears, and the effect changes even in a negative way—male partners with high financial control experience partner undermining more than those with low financial control in times of high financial strain. The present study shows that finance is an important sphere in later couple life as well as in early couple life. Additionally, the study suggests that financial counselors and educators be aware of the varying roles of financial control, particularly among older men.

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<sup>1</sup> Doctoral Candidate, University of Maryland, Department of Family Science, 1142 SPH Building, College Park, MD 20742, USA. Phone: 240-813-5131. Email: sentip@umd.edu.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, University of Maryland, Department of Family Science, 1142 SPH Building, College Park, MD 20742, USA. Phone: 301-405-3500. Email: jinkim@umd.edu.