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'It was something that was going to happen...':  
the experiences of older involuntarily childless  
men.



# Ageing and childlessness

- Older childless adults: ‘...rendered invisible in social science literature.’ (Dykstra and Hagestad 2007: p. 1275).
- Survey data indicates older childless adults have an increased risk of loneliness, social, isolation, depression, and ill health (Dykstra and Hagestad, 2007).
- Formerly married childless men showed poorer physical health, excessive drinking and smoking, depression, and sleeping difficulties than men with partners (Kendig et al, 2007).

# The Sample

- 14 men were interviewed: 27 semi-structured interviews in total
- Aged between 49 – 82
- 2 non-heterosexual, 12 heterosexual
- 7 single (5 solo living including 2 widowers ; 1 lodged; 1 in family home)
- 7 in relationships (6 living together; 1 LAT)
- 13 were White-British; 1 Anglo-Celtic Australian
- 6 drew pensions (4 working part-time)
- 3 were seeking work (1 unregistered); 1 DLA
- 3 full time employment; 1 not seeking employment

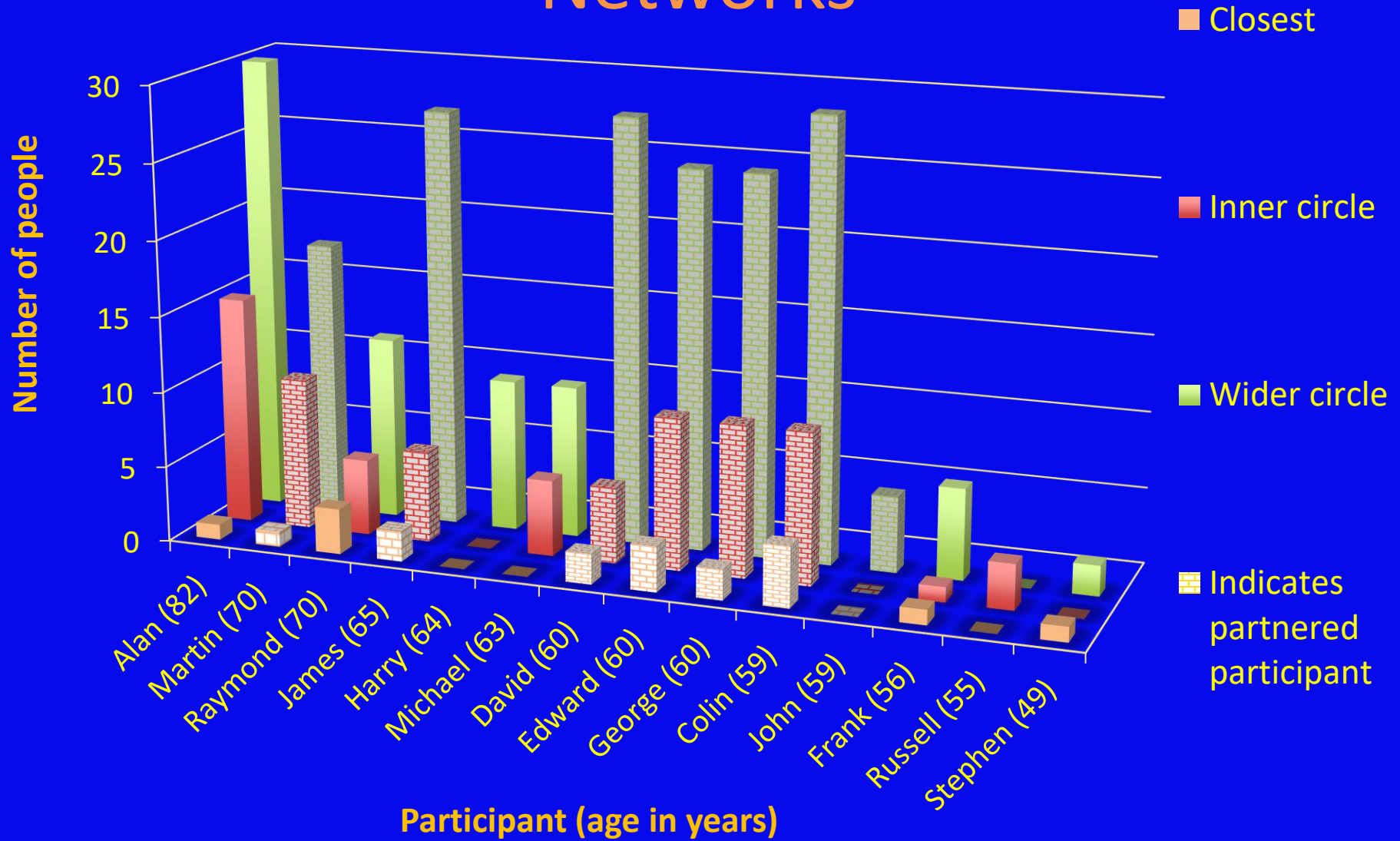
# Social context

**Harry (70):** *'I always imagined I would have children.'*

**Raymond (70):** *'I think from about like fifteen years old I knew I was gay, so in my mind even then I knew I would never get married. So I suppose I didn't even think too much about children because you don't get married them days you didn't have children.'*

**David (60):** *'I just naturally, in growing up, rather assumed I would leave school, do university, get a job, get married, and have a family'*

# Networks



# Transitions of involuntary childlessness

Position	Participant	Age	Relationship status
Pre-transition	David	60	Married
	Frank	56	Single
	Stephen	49	Single
Transitional	Russell	55	Single
	Michael	63	Single
Post-transitional	Alan	82	Single
	Colin	59	In a relationship
	Edward	60	In a relationship
	George	60	Married
	Harry	64	Single/Widower
	James	65	In a relationship
	John	59	In a relationship
	Martin	70	Married
	Raymond	70	Single/Widower



# Post-transitional: awareness

**Harry:** *'I'm never going to be able to say this is my grandson am I?'*

**Martin:** *'It's something I will never stop regretting. You know, it won't go away.'*

**Raymond:** *'I don't want people saying, "Oh, he's a bit of a paedophile, this one, looking at the kids." You know?'*

**Edward:** *'It is noticeable that friends who have children drift away; they get into other circles of other friends who've got children and that's been very marked.'*

# Thank you for listening.



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