Evaluating the impact of the environment on the physical activity levels of people with dementia in aged care facilities

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Abstract
To evaluate the impact of the environment on the physical activity levels of people with dementia living in residential aged care facilities

Keywords
physical, impact, facilities, care, aged, dementia, people, activity, environment, evaluating, levels

Disciplines
Arts and Humanities | Life Sciences | Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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"Evaluating the Impact of the Environment on the Physical Activity Levels of People with Dementia in Aged Care Facilities"  
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Research Aim  
- To evaluate the impact of the environment on the physical activity levels of people with dementia living in residential aged care facilities

Setting and Sample  
- Illawarra Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) (6 in total)
  - 4 nursing homes (high care) and 2 hostels (low care)
- Staff in Residential Aged Care Facilities

Findings from Physical Activity (PA) Observations and SCEAM Tool

Physical Activity Observations
- Total of 54 observations x 20 mins = 110 hours
- Residents with dementia engaged in physical activity from 5 to 900 mins (mean 300 mins)
- Of the PA time a mean of 15% (range 0-100%) was spent with staff engaging in care activities
- Overall, time spent in PA was low

SCEAM Tool
- Oldest building (Facility 3) with a low "physical" score (62%) created highest opportunities for PA (64%)
- Newest building (Facility 1) had the lowest "cognitive" score (31%) and lowest PA (8%)
- Use of attractive communal areas is discouraged through lack of access
- Physical activity was increased by social engagement e.g. an interest in researchers

Conclusions
- The wide range of data enabled a full evaluation of factors impacting on physical activity levels
- Findings are being used by "Best Practice" groups at Warrigal Care to make care changes

References
- Parker et al. (2004) Quality of life and building design in residential and nursing homes for older people Ageing & Society 24; 941-962
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