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An exploratory study on facilitators and barriers to aging-in-place by seniors in New England, USA

Sajay Arthanat, John Wilcox
University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, USA

Introduction/Rationale: Aging-in-place has significant meaning and cost benefits to the elderly. Although aging-in-place is well conceptualized in literature, there is limited research elucidating the perspectives and the potential of the elderly on its practical implementation.

Objectives: The broad objectives of this research are to establish: 1) the perspectives of older adults towards implementation of aging in place; 2) the factors that determine success of aging in place solutions; and 3) the availability of and gaps in resources within the elderly population to age-in-place.

Methods: This three-phase study is being conducted using an exploratory mixed-methods approach involving seniors in the New England region of USA and is scheduled for completion in early 2018. In Phase I, semistructured interviews were conducted with a purposive and diverse sample of 10 seniors living in the community. In Phase II, focus groups were organized with 20 seniors in the community and those living in assisted living facilities. Based on the findings, a large sample of elderly will be surveyed to examine the demographic and societal factors that influence aging-in-place implementation.

Results: Preliminary findings confirm home accessibility, home automation, safety and fall prevention, information communication technology and community access as the key facilitators to aging-in-place. The survey is expected to reveal the actual capacity and demographic attributes of seniors to implement these facilitators.

Conclusion: The study offers a comprehensive outlook into practical aspects of aging-in-place and will have practice implications for occupational therapists working in community and home-health settings for the elderly.