

Legacy Project: Literature Review

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Article 1

Conditions Facilitating Aging in Place in Rural Communities: The Case of Smart Senior Towns in Iowa.

Older Americans are among the fastest-growing demographics and are expected to comprise 20% of the US population by 2030 (Matysiak & Peters, 2023). The rural population is outpacing its urban counterpart, with many rural counties aging due to the attraction of retirees for the amenities and recreation possibilities for those aged 65 and older. In Iowa, smart senior towns allow adults 65 and older to live safely, independently, and comfortably in their homes and community (Matysiak & Peters, 2023). Smart senior towns are defined as towns scoring higher in terms of positive evaluations of senior services' quality. Drawing from the literature, local services, social connections, security and a sense of identity, and local participation and social inclusion are important factors for aging in place.

Aging in place has been shown to extend longevity and quality of life. Aging in place supports preserving independence compared to living in an institutionalized setting such as a nursing home or assisted living facility. In the study by Matysiak & Peters (2023), eight smart senior towns were compared with six vulnerable senior towns and 14 communities. Residents of smart senior towns tend to socialize significantly more in town in the case of downtown shops (37.51% vs. 21.81%), town squares (16.18 vs. 8.75%), and golf or country clubs (12.74 vs. 5.94%) (Matysiak & Peters, 2023). More significantly, according to residents 65+ of the smart senior towns, quality-of-life dimensions scored higher than vulnerable senior towns. Residents of old smart towns report satisfaction of 64.65% vs. 35.25% of residents of vulnerable senior towns. According to the study, smart senior towns consider the aging population's needs and correlate

socializing opportunities with improved outcomes for older adults' well-being (Matysiak & Peters, 2023).

Article 2

Physical Attributes of Housing and Elderly Health: A New Dynamic Perspective

Housing is not simply sheltering but is also linked to the individual's well-being. There is a strong attachment to the house and its role in the independence and capabilities of the elderly (Yang & Fu, 2019). Housing that is beneficial to health increases the safety and comfort of the dwelling and improves various living and utility functions in the daily life of aging. The research by Yang & Fu (2019) worked to fill the gap in the correlation between housing and health. The effect of housing on the health of the elderly is complex due to the interaction between the competence of the elderly and housing. The relationship goes beyond health-related physical hazards and accident prevention. Yang & Fu (2019) focused the study on the concept of a "healthy housing environment," a term used to describe a home that is accessible for the older adult and considers safety, health, amenities, and convenience. In the study, the health status of the elderly was measured based on activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) and was further classified into four levels based on the variables: without assistance, with minor assistance, with extensive assistance, and completely unable to complete without assistance. To assess the health status of the elderly, a health function credit (HFC) index was constructed to identify the individual's health condition. The higher the HFC, the healthier the people were. The study shows a correlation between older adults with higher HCC scores related to good housing conditions. On average, the positive effect of housing on controlling health deterioration increased from 1.6% to 2.57% (Yang & Fu, 2019). The study reflects that

housing as a bundle of attributes, including safety, health, amenities, and convenience, is more important than any single attribute (Yang & Fu, 2019).

References

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