



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research was to explore the obstacles faced by residents of LTC institutions to participating in physical activities.

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

This study indicates that a dedicated space for physical activity may be a motivation for several elderly LTC residents to participate.

Perceived barriers to physical activity among older adults residing in long-term care institutions

Chen, Y.-M. 2010 | *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. Volume 19, Issue 3-4, Pages 432-439

Key Concepts/Context

It is well documented by the World Health Organization (WHO), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other worldwide healthcare organizations that regular physical activity has several benefits, particularly for the elderly. The detriments to their physical and mental health are also well documented. Yet it is seen that a substantial proportion of the elderly do not pursue physical activity on a regular basis. Literature, according to the author, indicates that the elderly face a variety of obstacles that limit their active participation in physical activity, especially in long-term care (LTC) institutions. The author in this research aims to explore the factors that impede the elderly in LTC from partaking in physical activity. After analyzing interviews with 90 residents of a nursing home in Taiwan, the author found that the physical environment was one of the five major barriers that limited residents' participation in regular physical activity.

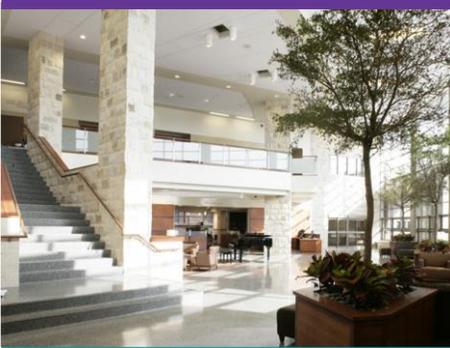
Methods

The methodology used in this study was a qualitative, exploratory one. A total of 90 elderly participants (mean age – 78.5 years) were recruited for the research by purposive sampling. Interviews lasting between 20 and 35 minutes were conducted with the research participants. The transcripts from these recorded interviews were subjected to content analysis.

Findings

The study found that the elderly at the study site considered the following to be the major barriers to regular physical activity:

1. Physical health problems and physical frailty
2. Fear of resultant injury and falling



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3. History of sedentary lifestyle
4. Insufficient understanding about physical activities
5. Environmental restrictions

Findings pertaining to the barriers due to environmental conditions are discussed here. These were:

- The institutions did not have the space, in terms of accessibility or convenience, for physical activities.
- The institutions did not have the necessary resources to motivate residents to partake in physical activities. There was specific reference by residents to:
 - Limited (common) living space
 - No suitable space for walking outdoors
 - Lack of activity-related equipment

Limitations

The author identified the following to be a limitation to this study: the sample was not representative, as all participants in this study were from nursing homes, which is just one type of an LTC institution.

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