The authors of this study note the impact of a home-like environment on the cognitive decline of dementia patients. Researchers gathered data on patients who were living in an Alzheimer Care Center (ACC). They collected demographic information from September 2002 – August 2009. A total of 314 residents were included. Additional data was collected using the Functional Autonomy Measurement System and the Mini Mental State Examination. Data was collected annually, entered into SPSS, and compared using ANOVA tests and Post hoc Tukey HSD tests. Independent T-tests were calculated. Stepwise regression was performed to determine any relationship between 3MS and SMAF scores and a resident’s length of stay in the ACC. Pearson correlations were calculated to determine any relationships between residents’ MMSE and SMAF scores, as well as age and length of stay. Cohen’s kappa was used to determine the level of agreement between raters for the SMAF assessment, while Spearman’s correlations described the consistency between raters of the 3MS and MMSE.

The lack of significant decline in cognitive functioning of the residents confounded the results of the study. The researchers were notably surprised and shocked at the lack of variation among residents across the 9-year study period.

Eight years of data on residents in small dementia-care settings suggest functional performance is maintained.


Key Concepts/Context
The authors of this study note the impact of a home-like environment on the cognitive decline of dementia patients.

Methods
Researchers gathered data on patients who were living in an Alzheimer Care Center (ACC). They collected demographic information from September 2002 – August 2009. A total of 314 residents were included. Additional data was collected using the Functional Autonomy Measurement System and the Mini Mental State Examination. Data was collected annually, entered into SPSS, and compared using ANOVA tests and Post hoc Tukey HSD tests. Independent T-tests were calculated. Stepwise regression was performed to determine any relationship between 3MS and SMAF scores and a resident’s length of stay in the ACC. Pearson correlations were calculated to determine any relationships between residents’ MMSE and SMAF scores, as well as age and length of stay. Cohen’s kappa was used to determine the level of agreement between raters for the SMAF assessment, while Spearman’s correlations described the consistency between raters of the 3MS and MMSE.

Findings
The lack of significant decline in cognitive functioning of the residents confounded the results of the study. The researchers were notably surprised and shocked at the lack of variation among residents across the 9-year study period.
Limitations

Staff "charted by exception" so that only exceptional circumstances were documented, making it difficult for researchers to catch day-to-day nuances among residents. The sample site was relatively small.