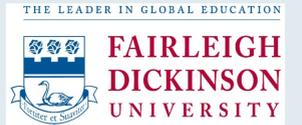


Elderly health services at senior centers in an urban South Korean community

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purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the current status of elderly health services provided by senior centers in South Korea and to pinpoint any improvements or recommendations needed for the South Korean senior centers to better serve elderly population.

Introduction

South Korean senior centers in urban communities are government-sponsored public facilities with the greatest ease of accessibility and most frequent usage among older adults.

These senior centers have been operating since 1989; currently, there are 350 locations across the country which is more than twice the number of public health centers.

Approximately, 8.9% of older adults use the centers regularly, while 19.5% are willing and planning to use them.

Characteristics of participants (n=15)

Group 1	No.	Sex	Age (yr)	Education	Participation (yr), (times/week)	Health service utilization
Senior Center Users	1	M	79	Middle school	12 (3)	Fitness
	2	M	77	Four-year college	5 (1)	Diabetes self-management
	3	M	94	Four-year college	12 (7)	Tai chi, yoga, laughter therapy
	4	F	70	High school	7 (6)	Table tennis, taekkyeon
Group 2	No.	Sex	Age	Education	Year of experience	Position
Elderly Experts	1	F	42	PhD in Health Science	Community health, 19	Professor
	2	F	52	PhD Nursing Science	Nursing science, 29	Professor
	3	M	48	Doctor of Medicine	Medicine, 24	Professor
	4	F	34	Bachelor in Social Work	Senior center, 8	Section chief
	5	F	54	Doctoral Candidate in Social Work	Senior center, 11	Director
Group 3	No.	Sex	Age	Education	Work experience	Position
Senior Center Nurses	1	F	49	Four-year college	3.5(10.6)	Nurse
	2	F	48	Four-year college	2 (15)	Nurse
	3	F	46	Four-year college	15 (19)	Nurse
	4	F	28	Four-year college	1.8 (4)	Nurse
	5	F	54	Four-year college	2 (15)	Nurse
	6	F	39	Four-year college	12 (16)	Nurse

Methodology

The qualitative data for this study were collected using focused group interviews (FGI). The participants were recruited via purposive sampling (n=15; see Table 1) to explore perspectives from various senior center stakeholders and to assist in a multi-faceted understanding of health services utilization in senior centers.

Six senior center nurses, five health and welfare experts of older adults, and four elderly attendees of the senior center were recruited.

Major questions asked:

What is the role of a senior center?

In what health services do senior center attendees participate?

What should be included in senior center health services?

What are the current challenges of senior center health services?

What is needed for improvements?

Results

Main themes identified	Subthemes
Challenges of the senior center health services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Insufficient availability of elderly health services 2) Lack of resources to meet the elderly health service needs 3) Overlapping elderly health services 4) Unclarified nurses' role 5) Low utilization and unclarified role of visiting doctors
Suggestions for the future health services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Senior centers should act as hubs to connect elderly health and welfare services 2) Elderly health services provided by senior centers should focus more on disease prevention and chronic disease management 3) Nurse empowerment is needed with better clarification for the nurses' role 4) Institutional regulations in regard to the nurses' role must be established for the senior centers 5) Educational and administrative resources are needed to better support elderly health services

Conclusion

The study results revealed several challenges, including insufficient health services, the lack of resources, overlapped, uncoordinated, and non-systematic health service roles, unclarified nurse's role, and low utilization and unclear visiting doctors' role.