Background: Patient-centered care emphasizes the importance of client preferences in all care environments. While some studies have been done to test the relationship between perceived level of choice and satisfaction in senior living communities, there is a lack of knowledge regarding what exactly is a priority to residents and what features contribute to a homey environment (Bangerter et al., 2016). For many reasons, understanding this specific population’s needs is important.

- The number of individuals residing in senior living communities is expected to increase as the baby boomer generation ages (Yoder, 2012).
- An epidemic of chronic illness will drastically increase the number of individuals residing in senior living communities (Yoder, 2012).
- Every adult will be associated with these senior living communities at some point in their life whether it be through living there, having a loved one there, or working there. Senior living community staff are beginning to recognize the need to improve hominess and comfort. Some studies have investigated possible changes to be made; however, it is not always clear what stakeholders, most importantly residents, value most (Shield et al., 2014). One Scottish study found varying viewpoints related to how standards, the ability to play an active role, and a sense of belonging contributed to a sense of hominess in a senior care facility, but it is unclear if the same viewpoints are present in the United States (Fleming et al., 2015).

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of what is meant by “homey” in the senior living community and explore what characteristics residents, families, and staff believe make a senior living community in the United States feel "homey". The study will also determine if these characteristics transcend national boundaries.

Methods: This IRB approved study is a replication of a project done in Scotland. The recruited sample will include 5 to 10 participants from 3 categories; residents, families, and staff members. The study will use a Q methodology design which involves the use of a set of philosophical principles, data collection techniques, and statistical procedures to quantitatively study subjective beliefs and attitudes (Watts & Stenner, 2012). With the investigator present, participants will:

- Sort a set of 30 subjective statements from Fleming et al. (2014) about the characteristics that they feel are most important to quality of life and hominess in a senior living facility.
- Record their preferences on a -3 to +3 forced distribution sorting sheet.
- Supplement responses with follow-up interview questions.

Data Analysis: By-person factor analysis will be done using PQMethod software to find groups with shared viewpoints (http://schmolck.userweb.mwn.de/qmethod/). A factor array with factor scores and narrative will be used to describe the shared viewpoints. Finally, a second order factor analysis will be completed to find commonalities between this study and the original Scottish study.

Example Q-statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keeping up my interests</th>
<th>Feeling part of a community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in planning the future.</td>
<td>Having good food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff take time to talk with me</td>
<td>Being seen as an individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion: This study will reveal the characteristics family members, residents, and staff feel are most important in creating a homey environment in senior living centers in the United States. It will also determine if these are the same or different viewpoints than those identified in Scotland by Fleming and colleagues (2015). It is anticipated that the findings from this study will contribute to the body of literature used by nurses, designers, and administrators to improve quality of life in senior living communities. The findings will also provide future direction for research in:

- Models of evaluation of senior living centers
- Models for guidance on selecting senior living communities for families and future residents

References


