



Seniors' Housing Update

Gerontology Research Centre
Simon Fraser University
at Harbour Centre
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Local and Provincial Initiatives in Rental Housing Safety

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One of the biggest realities for apartment owners and building managers throughout B.C. and the rest of Canada is that the demographic profile of their renters is changing very quickly. In the past, the typical renter was a younger adult or couple. In the future, it is more likely to be someone in their 60s, 70s or 80s. Some seniors have always rented and are simply growing older and others are moving from home ownership to apartment living. Currently 17.5% of renters are seniors. Seniors can be among apartment owners' and building managers' best tenants.

Unfortunately not all seniors who are renting feel safe in their community. Crimes and other illegal actions are a growing concern for seniors. While it is generally recognized that older adults are less likely than other age groups to be victims of crime,¹ those living in rental housing appear to be a higher risk group because they often have poorer health, fewer community connections, and fewer resources to enable them to leave if they wanted. Irrespective of the real level of crime, more than four out of every ten seniors feel unsafe when walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark.² Older women are particularly likely to

feel unsafe where they live.³ Some older adults isolate themselves in their apartments because they are fearful. This has a significant effect on their daily activities and on their overall quality of life.

In some cases, building managers are concerned about the physical safety of residents who have lived in the building 20 or more years, but are becoming increasingly physically or mentally frail. Other times, seniors feel threatened or are being harassed by other residents. In some cases, the local neighbourhood has deteriorated: strangers are entering the building illegally, there are thefts and break-ins; or frauds and scams may go on. Other times, the senior can be experiencing victimization by family who may or may not live in the building.

Many of today's building managers are responsible for the physical care of the building and they are expected to be good people managers and problem solvers. However, building managers and building supervisors from across Canada note that when they try to deal with these challenging situations, they often do not have the time and skills and do not know where to obtain the needed support and assistance in the community. This often leads to frustration, job stress, and burn out.

Increasingly, building managers, community health agencies, housing resource agencies and police agencies have been working together to address the safety and security needs of tenants of all ages. Some initiatives (see below) focus on improving the physical safety of rental housing. Others concentrate more on the psychosocial environment and improving building managers and owners' understanding of the changing profile of tenant populations.

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**SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY**
AT HARBOUR CENTRE

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BCNPHA's membership is largely comprised of people who manage and operate non-profit rental housing. This sector includes both seniors-only housing and mixed housing for people of all ages. Among other things, the Association provides opportunities for learning and information sharing among their membership and offers services that enhance their members' ability to provide positive environments for tenants, staff, and directors.

To serve the non profit sector better and to assure its long term viability, the Association has recently developed a two prong revitalization program, aimed at improving the building stock and revitalizing non-profit housing boards to achieve a good balance between long term board experience and bringing in new spirit and ideas. The Association has long recognized the special knowledge and skills that people need to become good building managers. To that end, the Association has been working with Kwantlen College to develop a certificate program for non-profit housing managers. This program will tie in with the existing program that Kwatlen College currently offers for Property Management.

In addition to scheduled training sessions offered to its members throughout the year, BCNPHA also holds a 2-1/2 day conference every year in November. The conference has approximately 50 workshops, covering a wide range of topics germane to non-profit housing boards, societies and managers. During the past few years, one of the important education areas has been issues related to housing seniors. The BCNPHA conference this year is scheduled for November 16–18, 2000 at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Vancouver.

Senior West End Link (SWEL)

Phone: (604) 669-7841 or fax: (604) 669-7559

Recognizing that building managers are vital to linking seniors to community resources, SWEL holds a monthly seminar/workshop that assists building managers in the West End of Vancouver to successfully deal with issues involving older tenants. The informal "coffee hour" meetings offer managers an opportunity to share concerns and solutions with others working in their profession. A core group of about 40 building managers meet regularly, and another 60 managers attend intermittently.

Over the six years that the program has been in place, SWEL has brought in many different community resources to provide building managers with current information on issues important to do them (such as dealing safely and respectfully with alcohol or mental health issues among tenants, or successfully working with difficult tenants). Some information sessions are focussed more on proper procedures, such as fire safety, or what to do if there is a death in the building. One of the elements that has assured the success of the program is that it has a Coordinator responsible for arranging the speakers and frequently contacting the building managers individually to encourage their continued involvement.

Sunset Towers Advocacy Resource (STAR)

Jennifer Wallace, phone: (604) 688-1615 or fax: (604) 688-1656

Sunset Towers provides social housing in the West End of Vancouver. The building has a mixed tenancy in its 501 suites, largely comprised of seniors with some additional younger people with mental or physical disabilities. Over the years, the building has experienced significant problems with physical and social deterioration, with some tenants fearing to leave their suites.

A large proportion of residents in the building have high economic needs, and some high psychosocial needs as well which require special knowledge on the part of building managers and staff to manage appropriately. Recognizing that need, B.C. Housing Commission funded the STAR program to improve the physical and psychosocial environment of the building. The managers of the building work closely with service providers (such as alcohol and drug counsellors and social workers) to address the service gaps and overlaps.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Program

Constable Glen Richmond, phone (604) 517-2494 or email: GRichmond@nwpolice.org. To find out more about the next scheduled workshop or to register for a workshop, phone (604) 594-1552

This program was first developed in the United States and was introduced to New Westminster, B.C. in 1995. It has subsequently expanded to several B.C. communities. The program is designed to help residents, owners and managers of rental property keep illegal activity off of their property and to provide a safer, more habitable environment for residents. The program can help reduce seniors' fears of becoming potential victims.

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is introduced in three separate phases, each designed to educate owners, managers and residents while improving security and building a community atmosphere for each individual property. The three phases include:

- a one day seminar for owners, property or resident managers, and selected police personnel, focussing on crime prevention concepts, crime prevention through environmental design, applicant screening, to serve and protect (what the police can and cannot do), residential tenancy requirements, and combating illegal activities.
- on-site security assessments of each property conducted by the police using the principles and strategies of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- the owners/resident managers hosting a "Safety Social" (residents' meeting) in order to develop a community atmosphere. A police representative explains both the program and benefits and current crime prevention concepts.

B.C. Housing Management Commission

1701 - 4330 Kingsway, Burnaby B.C. V5H 4G7, phone (604) 433-1711 or fax: (604) 439-4722

The Commission has started a new program entitled "Crime Free Housing" and all BC Housing staff are trained in this program offered through the Justice Institute. This is a modified form of the "Crime Free Multi-Housing Program" which is being run in New Westminster, Kelowna and Victoria. New tenants to B.C. Housing buildings are now required to sign an addendum to their tenancy agreement which states that the tenant, any person invited by the tenant or any member of the

tenant's family shall not engage in any criminal activity on the property, and if they do, warning them that it will be sufficient cause to end the tenancy.

Seniors Housing Information Program (SHIP)

Val MacDonald, phone: (604) 520-6621, fax: 520-1798 or email: ship@telus.net

This Lower Mainland program has been providing information to seniors and community resources for many years. SHIP regularly offers a course that gives people an orientation to seniors' housing and services to help improve "the match" between housing being offered to seniors and their real needs. The course provides information on seniors' housing, seniors' benefits and services available in the Lower Mainland, and provides practical communication and counselling skills. The course is helpful to people who work with seniors or who might like to work with seniors in the future; senior peer counselors; and staff and volunteers in senior centres.

Vancouver Richmond Health Board

Bonnie Lillies, phone: (604) 709-6483, fax: (604) 872-7270, email: bonnie_lillies@vrhb.bc.ca or visit their website http://www.vcn.bc.ca/vrhb/seniors_phac.htm

From April to June 2000, the Vancouver Richmond Health Board, the Seniors Housing Information Program and the B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association co-sponsored a series of three workshops for resident managers of seniors' housing. The workshops identified community resources and introduced a number of aging and support system issues to non-profit building managers. In addition, the sessions provided an opportunity for building managers to network with each other and to raise a variety of increasingly pressing internal policy and management topics arising in their work. The B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association hopes to hold the workshops again in Spring, 2001, and to work with health boards in other communities to expand them.

Steps to Seniors' Safety and Security in Rental Housing

Carol Ward Hall of B.C. CEAS phone: (604) 521-1235 or fax (604) 515-0201 or Charmaine Spencer at Simon Fraser University, phone: (604) 291-5047, fax (604) 291-5066 or by email: c_spencer@sfu.ca

Steps to Seniors' Safety and Security in Rental Housing is a special education and training project recently funded by Justice Canada under the Crime Prevention and Community Mobilization Fund. The overall purpose of the project is to help create safer rental communities by increasing building managers knowledge of aging issues with practical information on problems they commonly face, and helping them link to available community resources (e.g. health, mental health and addiction services; police; other appropriate community resources.)

The project will begin with a series of focus groups with seniors, building managers and community members in Victoria

and the Okanagan in the Fall of 2000 to identify

- the types of harms that seniors are experiencing in rental housing,
- the kinds of information and support that seniors, building managers, and housing society boards or property management companies feel they need.

The project will subsequently develop information for seniors who are renting as well as develop education and training materials for building managers. The project will also look at ways to bring together existing community resources together with building managers so that they can deal with new issues as they arise

Steps to Seniors Safety and Security in Rental Housing is a joint initiative involving for-profit and non-profit rental businesses, organizations, community members, B.C.CEAS and the Gerontology Research Centre at Simon Fraser University. The Steering Committee members include the Seniors Housing Information Program, B.C. Non-Profit Housing Society, Tenants Rights Action Coalition, and the B.C. Housing Management Commission, plus other community members. The project will also be linking with the B.C. Apartment Owners and Managers Association and other key rental housing stakeholders. The Project is located in B.C. However, the information will be useful to apartment owners and building managers throughout the country.

The Project is currently canvassing for interested local representatives to join working groups in Victoria and the Okanagan to help shape the direction of the project. It is also looking for apartment owners and building managers to take part in focus groups in these two communities in the Fall.

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AN EXAMPLE OF A FUNDING AGENCY-DRIVEN POST-OCCUPANCY EVALUATION OF THERAPEUTIC GARDENS IN A MULTI-LEVEL CARE FACILITY FOR THE AGED

Yuko Heath, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria

In 1995, a multi-level care facility for the aged in Victoria, British Columbia, invested in designing and constructing eight therapeutic courtyard gardens. They were constructed using fundraised dollars from veterans' and community organizations. After the gardens had been in use for a reasonable period, a need for a systematic evaluation arose to determine whether the therapeutic gardens had been helpful for users and, importantly, whether the money was perceived by all concerned to have been well-spent.



In order to answer this question, a Post-Occupancy-Evaluation (POE) of the therapeutic gardens was conducted, involving interviewing and a questionnaire survey of all the user groups: residents, staff, family members, and volunteers. A POE is a set of methods for examining the effectiveness of occupied environments for human users.⁴ The focus is to evaluate the built environment in terms of functionality for users, as opposed to the evaluation of aesthetic features only.⁵ The POE helped determine whether the money was well spent, where the facility might be improved through renovation, provided a test of whether the design goals were met, and offered guidelines for future developments of a similar nature.

The eight therapeutic gardens at the facility were designed with five major overall goals and eleven safety and motivational features. Specifically, the five main goals were:

- to provide a safe outdoor environment,
- to provide a place for reflection,
- to provide a place for relaxation,
- to provide a place for socialization, and
- to provide a place for people to maintain the hobby of gardening.

Some of the eleven motivational features include: wheelchair accessible level pathways, handrails around the garden perimeter, use of non-toxic plants, raised



garden beds for wheelchair users, protection from the sun and wind, and water features, such as ponds and streams.

Findings

- Eighty three percent of the 190 respondents reported that they had used at least one of the eight gardens, and 96.5% of the respondents said that they liked the gardens.
- More family members reported using the gardens than residents or volunteers.
- Over 80% of the users judged that most of the gardens' design goals were well met, except for the fifth goal (provide a place to maintain the hobby of gardening).
- The evaluation of specific garden features varied widely: Seventy percent indicated that wheelchair accessibility and the garden beds met the safety needs of the users; 65% of respondents said the handrails and water features met the safety needs of users. On the other hand, only 16% indicated that trees provided enough shade for users.
- Seventy four percent of respondents said that the money was well spent, and the question "Do you think the money was well-spent?" attracted the most comments.

Most of the comments on the questionnaires tended to be negative, and were categorized into two themes:

- Some design features that were supposed to help cognitively impaired residents were not seen to be working well. Instead, rather ironically, they were seen as hazardous to the residents; and
- The gardens and some of the features were not utilized enough by residents.

Staff members tended to be more critical and to give more negative comments in the survey.

Beneficial outcomes of the POE

Post-occupancy evaluations are important because they can help determine the strengths and weaknesses of a certain environment and they can be used as a guide for improvement of existing environments and in the development of new similar projects. As a result of this POE, within the constraints of available funding

significant improvements have been instigated at the facility. For example, because some respondents gave negative comments about wheelchair accessibility into the gardens from the facility, the facility has installed automatic doors for all the entrances to the gardens. Moreover, because the fifth goal, provide a place for gardening, was not rated well, the facility has now increased the open space for the residents to do their own gardening. A new potting bench and raised bed planters have been designed specifically for residents.

We also believe that there were some indirect benefits of the evaluation. First, the questionnaire survey with open-ended questions gave the users the opportunity to express what they wanted to say about the gardens. Second, as some respondents pointed out, the survey also raised the awareness of users about the gardens and encouraged them to get more involved in design and improving the gardens.

— *This study will be published in Activities, Adaptation, & Aging (2000), vol. 25, issue 2.*

If you are interested in learning more about this project or post occupancy evaluations, please contact Yuko Heath at the Department of Psychology, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 3050, Victoria BC V8W 3P5 or by email at yukonu@uvic.ca

ONLINE

Environment & Gerontology Network
<http://www.tm.tue.nl/gerontology/> or email Yvonne Slangen-de Kort at Y.A.W.d.Kort@tm.tue.nl

This webpage was created on behalf of two networks of people (mainly researchers and designers) who are interested in the area of environmental gerontology. The first is under the aegis of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA, United States). The second is one of the network groups of the European-based International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS).

Members of these networks are concerned with issues related to the diverse effects of designed environments on older individuals and groups. Issues may arise from theoretical, research related or design-practice related work.

The Land Centre: Land Use and Real Estate Info @ Your Finger Tips
<http://www.landcentre.ca/>

The Land Centre is a non-profit organization devoted to enabling access to education and information resources about land use and real estate. It brings together local and international resources and links, to assist all B.C. organizations that deal with real estate and land use issues. It can also be helpful to students and other individuals who are interested in land use and real estate-related topics.

Search the Land Centre's Web Library to access information or find resources of particular interest.

THE POTENTIAL FOR 'SMART HOME' SYSTEMS IN MEETING THE CARE NEEDS OF OLDER PERSONS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Martin Edge, Bruce Taylor and Guy Dewsbury, The Robert Gordon University, School of Construction, Property and Surveying, Aberdeen, Scotland

Mark Andrew Groves, British Columbia Real Estate Foundation Research Fellow, Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University

The technology involved in intelligent homes has a market that is currently growing exponentially. To date this market has been led predominantly by the provision of luxury leisure goods to sectors of the population with large amounts of disposable income. Intelligence has been incorporated into the prestigious home as a marketing device, just as it is in prestigious, top-of-the-range cars. This development has naturally enough, been led by companies with a vested interest in marketing technology for profit. As with other technologies, from the telephone, radio and television to the home computer, that technology is now diffusing down to other markets involving lower income groups, as it becomes cheaper and more generally available.

There is little doubt that, over the next very few years, the intelligent house will have become, if not integrated into normal life for all income groups, then at least a common, well-understood and desirable consumer good. The question is not whether smart home technology will become a standard in ordinary housing for ordinary people, but whether we can ensure that such technology is harnessed to meet the genuine social need of groups that would benefit the most from its use.

Smart Home - What is it?

A smart or intelligent home uses basic (and assistive) devices to build an environment in which many features in the home are automated and where devices can communicate with each other. Many of the basic devices are readily available and currently used in home security systems, such as passive infra-red sensors, pressure pads and magnetic reed switches

It also uses other familiar devices, like infrared transmitters similar to TV remote controls, smoke, heat and gas detectors, door entry systems, powered doors etc. In an intelligent house all these devices are connected together on a communication network. This communication network can be a special cable, mains wiring and/or radio frequencies.

Enabling devices to communicate efficiently means

that one device can then instruct other devices to perform functions if certain conditions are met. The initiating device could be any device in the house. In this way a collection of separate devices can be organized and programmed to carry out complex functions.

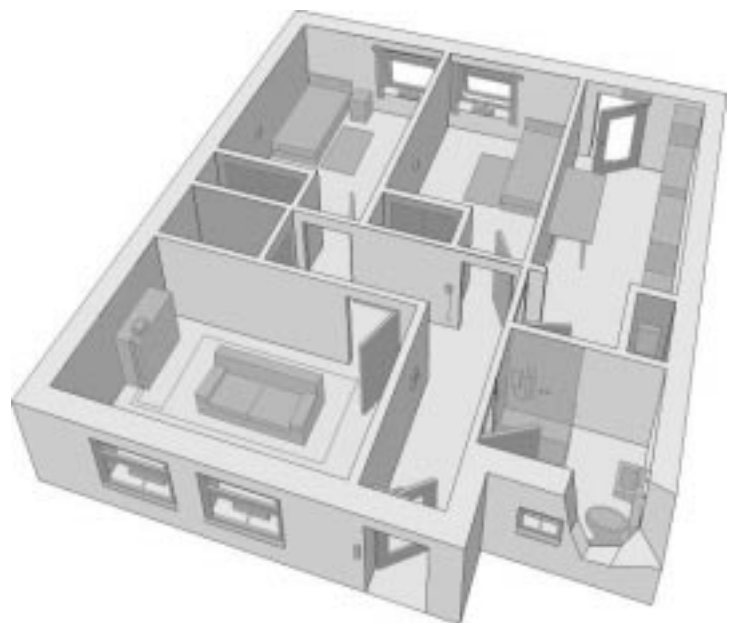
Smart homes have the potential to enable elderly and disabled people to lead independent lives in their own homes. However, the devices and their interactions need to be chosen and designed in such a way that the system as a whole meets the specific needs of the householder.

Example

An elderly person, who has a high risk of falling and injury, needs to be able to get safely to the toilet during the night. The functionality that could be provided for this case could be as follows:

- If a householder gets out of bed between the hours of 10pm and 8am then lights in the bedroom and hall come on at 50% of illumination increasing to 100% over one minute, the bathroom light is switched on at 100%.
- After leaving the bathroom, the bathroom light automatically switches off. After the person gets back into bed the bedroom light is dimmed from 100% to 50% over one minute and then switched off.
- If the householder does not leave the bathroom after a specified time, say 30 minutes, an alarm is activated.
- Between the hours of 8am and 10pm anyone stepping on the pressure pad (householder, visitor or cleaner) will not activate this functionality.

The above scenario can be implemented by using only a pressure pad by the bed, passive infrared sensors in the hall and bathroom and an alarm system.



Smart Homes and Social Care

Smart Homes are often the ideal solution for individuals with different needs and abilities. This is because a Smart Home can:

- Provide an environment that is constantly monitored to ensure the individual is safe (activity monitoring).
- Automate specific tasks that an individual is unable to perform (turning lights on or off).
- Provide a safe and secure environment (alerting the user of potentially dangerous activities).
- Alert helpers or carers should the occupant be in difficulties (through linking to a local community alarm scheme).
- Enable and empower the user.
- Facilitate in the rehabilitation of individuals (by giving prompts that could be auditory and/or visual)

There are many other ways in which Smart Homes can be of benefit to the disabled and older people.

The Robert Gordon University Faculty of Design is primarily concerned with the production and maintenance of high quality built environments that can meet the needs of the widest possible range of people. Our involvement in smart or intelligent housing does not stem from a commitment to the technology per se, or a perception that high-tech solutions to problems in the built environment are necessarily desirable or preferable to low-tech solutions. Rather it has arisen through an interest in universal or barrier free design and a desire to push these concepts way beyond the mere removal of physical obstructions like steps and narrow doorways. The idea of the barrier free home can be a much more proactive one and smart home technology can play a part in the removal of barriers to independent living for a wide range of people currently restricted both by their own disability and the environment around them.

To this end we have become involved in leading a research and development project, entitled CUSTODIAN funded by the European Commission. This project aims to ensure that the rapid pace of technological change, which is beginning to impact on the home and which will inevitably affect public sector organisations involved in social housing and care provision, is properly understood by that sector and controlled to its advantage.

CUSTODIAN aims to empower strategic decision-makers, carers and medical practitioners and facilitate communication between these sectors and the designers, providers and installers of smart home technology. The end product of the project will be a software tool designed to ensure that the needs of individual end users are sensitively met in a way that reflects their social circumstance, care, medical and institutional needs and resource constraints.

CUSTODIAN is designed to enable its users to design smart homes for older persons and persons with disabilities that reflect their needs. There is significant potential for this software within the Occupational Therapy, Social Care Management, Care Provider, and Housing Provider markets.

The Market for Intelligent Homes in the Wider Social Sector

Whether or not a large amount of intelligent, social sector housing that will meet care needs in the community is achieved, depends on a number of factors:

- Diffusion of the technology may rely on a continued fall in real prices of such systems, which seems immanent given the technological precedents, the downward trend in the price of devices and industry's plans in this area.
- It relies on demonstration of the benefits to different groups of people with disabilities, the information on which is growing but partial and still only related to selected disabilities.
- Perhaps most crucially it relies on economic scenarios demonstrating savings in institutional and community care costs.

In simple terms this last condition requires that we ask the question:

By allowing someone to remain independent in their own home, until later in life than they would otherwise be able to, can the hardware and support costs be offset by the savings in, for example, sheltered housing and nursing care costs?

If this condition can be met, smart housing has the potential, in the short term, to reduce pressure on existing stocks of supported housing, for example. In the longer term it requires a radical reappraisal of current scenarios for housing demand, which envisage greatly increased demand for supported housing and care, but which are based on the assumption that the nature of the house, as a passive construction of bricks and mortar, is an immutable, fixed entity.

The reality is that the home, even without intelligence is not so much bricks and mortar, but increasingly a series of personal care services. With the advent of the smart home the range of services that the home provides may be about to undergo a radical change. The nature of these services can either be dictated by the supply side; the manufacturers and suppliers of the technology; or can be mediated by the demand side; the care sector and the end users of the housing; to ensure that technological solutions are tailored to the real needs of people.

— *If you are interested in learning more about the CUSTODIAN project, contact Dr Martin Edge at Robert Gordon University, Scottish Centre for Environmental Design Research, School of Architecture, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen AB10 7QB, United Kingdom. Phone: +44 1224 263539, fax: +44 1224 263737 or email m.edge@rgu.ac.uk*



Statistics and Trends that effect Aging in Place

Mark Andrew Groves, British Columbia Real Estate Foundation Research Fellow,
Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University

Individuals and communities are being expected to assume increasing responsibility for their own health, within a framework of public support.⁶ To respond to this change, increased collaboration between communities, planners, developers, administrators and researchers is required to build smart homes and neighbourhoods that sustain aging in place, enabling people to stay in their preferred community for as long as possible.⁷ This is particularly important given the rapid and significant population aging, aging within the aging population, the incidence of dementia related activity limitations,⁸ continued de-institutionalization and the increased costs of community-based services.⁹

Incidence of Dementia

According to the World Health Organisation,¹⁰ dementia is globally the 12th highest cause of severe activity limitations. The 1997 global estimates for mortality, morbidity and disability caused by dementia for all ages are 200,000 deaths, 2,610,000 new cases, 29,000,000 cases in total and 15,950,000 persons with severe activity limitation (permanent and long term). The World Health Organisation notes:

The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer disease, a brain disorder characterized by gradual onset and progressive decline in cognition. The average course of the disease is approximately a decade, with a range of 3 to 20 years from diagnosis to death. As the disease advances, memory is increasingly lost, and changes in mood and behaviour follow.

While no current therapy can reverse the progressive cognitive decline, several pharmacological agents and psychosocial techniques have been shown to provide relief for the depression, psychosis and agitation often associated with dementia.

Generally, the management of dementia is based on long-term care, preferably at home, with support from a community-based health team. However, living with and caring for a person with dementia can be very burdensome and caregivers are at high risk of becoming exhausted. The needs of these carers should be kept in mind when planning services for people with dementia.

In Canada, Health Canada's National Advisory Council on Aging notes:¹¹

Dementia affects approximately 8% of all people aged 65 and over and between 25 and 30% of persons aged 80 and over. It is estimated that 20% of day care clients and over 50% of residents in long-term care facilities suffer from some form of dementia. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 64% of all cases of dementia in Canada. Alzheimer's disease, a degenerative disease of the brain, is the leading cause of dementia...

Dementia is a major challenge for families and the community sector as they strive to keep seniors in a familiar environment while making sure that caregivers are not exhausted by the task, particularly as the number of individuals with dementia could triple by 2031.

De-Institutionalization, Home Care and Population Aging

In Canada, the maintenance of long standing activity limitations and/or health conditions in the community is well established. Improvements in housing design, the availability of assistive devices, and increased accessibility (removal of barriers) in the community, have supported de-institutionalization. Consequently, the percentage of seniors living in an institution has declined from 10.2% in 1971 to 7.3% in 1996.¹² That is, nearly 93% of people aged 65 and over reside in the community. With de-institutionalization (and delayed institutionalization), the location of care is

shifted to private and/or group homes, and the personal care provided by institutional staff has been replaced by community support teams, home-care workers, family, friends and members of the community.

In 1997, 9.9% of all people aged 65 and over received some form of home care assistance while this percentage increased to 33% for those aged 85 and over. The cost of providing home care assistance has increased from \$1.1 billion in the 1990-91 fiscal year to nearly \$2.1 billion during the 1997-98 fiscal year, an increase from 2.3% to 4% of total public health spending.¹³

In Canada, in 1998 there were 3.7 million people aged 65+ representing 12% of the total population. Statistics Canada projects that as the baby boom generation passes 65 (in 2011), there will be approximately 6 million seniors in 2016 and nearly 10 million in 2041 (16% and 23% of the population). Population aging will peak around 2045 and stabilize around 20% after 2051. The fastest growth will occur in the older age ranges. Currently, people aged 85+ (380,000) represents 1.3% of the Canadian population. This figure will increase to approximately 4% of the total population by 2041 (1.6 million).

Given the projected increase in the number of people aged 85 and over and the prevalence of dementia within this population, the continuation of a policy of community based care requires smart homes and residential friendly zones that support the very old. Housing must be appropriate and located within convenient, accessible and appropriate neighbourhoods, the composition of which creates an appropriate person environment fit. This extends the construct of housing as a determinant of health to include the neighbourhood as a necessary structural requirement for sustaining aging in place.



FROM TRAP LINE TO ON LINE: Highlights from a Seniors Housing Conference in the Yukon

Nancy Gnaedinger, Social Research Consultant, Victoria B.C.

There are not a lot of older people in the Yukon - only about 1500 aged 65+, but they represent a growing proportion of the territory's population. Some are life-long residents, some have moved north to be with their children, and some are Yukoners who have returned to the Yukon for their retirement, after years of working in the South.

Yukon seniors and elders have a wide range of characteristics and experiences: some tend their trap lines; others spend time on line on their computer; some do both. Despite their diversity, older Yukoners share some common values, such as a rugged independence, love and respect for the land, a need for space, and above all, a desire to stay put! These values were clearly expressed at the December 1999 Yukon Seniors' Housing Conference where Mary Ann Clarke Scott¹⁴ and I were invited speakers.

Yukoners representing a variety of perspectives, cultures, and communities, during a panel presentation, gave poignant and memorable presentations. They pointed out that there are fundamental needs and strong preferences that should be taken into account when providing support for seniors and elders living in their own homes, and when planning purpose-built seniors' and elders' housing in the Yukon. (In the Yukon, First Nations seniors are referred to as elders, and all other seniors are referred to as seniors.)

Fundamental needs include heat, snow clearance, and affordable modifications to the home for safety reasons (especially in the bathroom). Definite preferences include wood heat, enough outdoor space for workshops, plenty of storage space, enough room for visitors, and not being

stacked in "tiny, tidy little airtight boxes". Another preference, not unique to Yukoners, is to be able to remain in one's own familiar community. "I was born here and I will die here".

Other needs were revealed during focus groups: the need for support services and affordable supportive housing options, especially outside Whitehorse; the need for telephone service in remote locations (an important safety consideration); and the need to accommodate First Nations and other cultures. The rules and regulations associated with receiving grants for home modifications were said to be a "turn-off".

The situation in the Yukon is that some older people who have lived in remote areas or in small communities all their lives must move to Whitehorse when their support needs cannot be accommodated where they live. Many do not want to do this. Some of the possible solutions I suggested include:

- Create a Wandering Handyman program, where at least one very skilled, bonded handyman "does the circuit" of small towns in the Yukon, clearing snow, chopping wood, and doing home adaptations. He could live in a comfortable van and use a cell phone. This support could make the difference, for some seniors and elders, between "staying put" and moving to the city.
- Use some of the many hotels and inns in the Yukon, which have low or no occupancy during the winter months, as seasonal supportive housing for seniors and elders during the winter, which may be the only time they feel at risk. (A monthly rent-plus-meal-package could be subsidized by the Yukon government, surely a less expensive option than building seniors' housing from scratch,

or paying for inappropriately early placement in a residential care facility. Keeping the hotels open would also keep more service people employed.)

- In small communities, which may only have 5 to 10 seniors or elders needing some supportive living arrangement, two well-built existing houses, side-by-side or back-to-back, could be purchased, renovated for accessibility, and joined. The adjoining structure could contain common areas for socializing and dining, and an elevator. This solution could meet the needs of up to 10 seniors and elders in a small community, without dramatically changing the look of the community.

These and other ideas were discussed in an ad hoc manner during and after the conference. I will report in a future issue of Seniors Housing Update on what changes have taken place as a result of the conference. I will also report on the results of two seniors' housing surveys recently conducted in the Yukon: one in Whitehorse, the other in small communities including Teslin, Mayo, Haine's Junction, and Watson Lake.

— Nancy Gnaedinger, a Research Affiliate of the Gerontology Research Centre, is an independent consultant who does applied social research, writing and teaching in gerontology. Her main areas of interest are housing, dementia, and health service delivery. She can be contacted by phone (250) 477-0667, fax (250) 477-5447 and email: ngnaed@islandnet.com.

Copies of the Yukon Seniors' Housing Conference Report (November 30-December 2, 1999) can be ordered from the Yukon Housing Corporation, 410H Jarvis Street, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2H5.

Recent Publications

Supportive Housing for Seniors

Supportive Housing for Seniors describes the concept of supportive housing, discusses how it works, who can benefit from it, what types of supportive housing options can be made available and how these can be developed. It also presents 10 examples of supportive housing projects from across Canada.

To obtain a copy of this report please contact: The Canadian Housing Information Centre, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 700 Montreal Road, Ottawa ON K1A 0P7, phone: 1 800 668-2642, fax: 1 800 245-9274 or visit www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/Research

Municipality Creates Affordable Life-Lease Housing for Seniors

Leading by example best sums up the idea behind the City of Nepean's strategy to create life-lease housing for seniors at minimal cost. The 66 unit project, called the Meridian, was self-financing and is now operated by a committee of residents with no further municipal involvement.

For further information please contact: Dennis Jacobs, City of Nepean (613) 727-6700 ext. 329 or email dennis-jacobs@city.nepean.on.ca

Vancouver/Richmond Health Board Strategic Plan for Housing Services: A Discussion Document

To promote and guide their future involvement in housing, the V/RHB recognized the need for a clearly articulated plan. The *Strategic Plan for Housing Services* sets out the vision and a framework to assist the Board in planning, development, funding and evaluation of housing interventions. This plan was accepted and approved by the Board on April 27, 2000. The plan emphasized the need for a fundamental shift from the more traditional emphasis on residential services to a more independent, supported model of housing services and provides a detailed breakdown of how the proposed shift towards supported housing across all high health risk populations might be realized. *The Strategic Plan for Housing Services* is

intended to be a discussion document and act as a catalyst to more dialogue.

A Copy of the plan can be obtained from the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board at 520 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver BC Canada V5Z 4H5, phone: (604) 736-2033 or fax: (604) 874-5729

Fixing to Stay: A National Survey on Housing and Home Modification Issues

This report presents results from a nationwide survey of Americans age 45 and over, examining their opinions and behaviours on current and future housing situations--with an emphasis on home modifications that enable people to remain living independently in their own homes.

An executive summary of this report is available online at the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) independent living website at <http://research.aarp.org/il/> or contact AARP Independent Living Program, 601 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20049, phone (202) 434-3980 for a copy of the full report.

Living Conditions of Low-Income Older Persons in Human Settlements

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) has just released a new report on the living conditions of poor older persons in 12 major cities worldwide: Ankara, Beijing, Budapest, Cape Town, Cairo, Kingston, Manila, Nairobi, Newark, New Delhi, Santiago and Sydney.

A copy of the report has been posted on the Institute for Public Administration website at www.theipa.org/publication/op2new.pdf

Seniors 2000 Profile: Health & Social Profiles by the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board

The development of the Seniors 2000 Profile was a joint effort of the Community and Public Involvement, Health Planning and Evaluation, and Communications and Health Education Departments of the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. The Seniors 2000 Profile provides current demographic, social and health information on older people in the Vancouver/Richmond

health region as a whole, as well as for each of its seven community health areas.

Statistical information used in this profile is based on Statistics Canada 1996 Census unless otherwise noted.

To receive the complete Seniors Profile 2000 Report or profile fact sheets for each of the seven community health areas, please contact the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board at phone: (604) 714-3798 or visit their website at www.vcn.bc.ca/vrhh

Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being by the Federal Interagency forum on aging related statistics

In the United states, many Federal agencies provide data on various aspects of the challenges confronting older persons. Because these data come from multiple agencies, it is sometimes difficult to understand how this group is faring overall.

The Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics is a coalition of nine Federal agencies: Administration on Aging; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Census Bureau; Health Care Financing Administration; National Center for Health Statistics; National Institute on Aging; Office of Management and Budget; Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services; and Social Security Administration.

This publication provides 31 key indicators, categorized into five broad groups: population, economics, health status, health risks and behaviours, and health care. These include:

- Indicator 5 Living Arrangements
- Indicator 11 Housing Expenditures
- Indicator 30 Nursing Home Utilization
- Indicator 31 Home Care

The public may view copies of the report on the web site <http://www.agingstats.gov>. Single printed copies of "Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being" are available from the National Center for Health Statistics, at (301) 458-4636 or by sending an e-mail request to nchsquery@cdc.gov.

Cities, Social Life and Sustainable Development

The 16th conference of the International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS) – University René Descartes, July 4-7, Paris

Mark Groves, Ph.D., British Columbia Real Estate Foundation Research Fellow in environmental gerontology at the Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University, attended the 16th IAPS conference. IAPS is an international association of social and environmental scientists as well as researchers and practitioners from the planning, engineering and design professions who are concerned with the different aspects of people-environment relations. The theme of the conference was addressed in the opening session by Jean-Pierre Fourcade (Mayor of Boulogne, Senator, former Minister of Economy) and more than 300 delegates through to the closing address by Peter Bridgewater (Directeur de la division de Sciences Ecologiques de l'UNESCO).

Conference highlights included a design case study by John Zeisel¹⁵ (President of Hearthstone Alzheimer Care, <http://www.thehearth.org/>) on how specific design guidelines can be generated using an understanding of brains of those with Alzheimer's disease, Esther Wiesenfeld (University of Venezuela, email: ewiesen@reacciu.ve) and Fernando Giuliani integration of environmental and community sustainability in a Caracas neighbourhood, and Tim Brindley's (The Leicester School of Architecture, email: tsb@dmu.ac.uk) dissection of village and community as models for sustainable cities. Mark Groves addressed the Housing Network and Environment and Gerontology Network meetings on the potential for home automation to sustain the independence of persons with dementia.

Culture, Quality of Life and Globalization: Problems & Challenges for the New Millennium, the 17th IAPS conference will be held in LA CORUNA, Galicia, Spain July 18-21, 2002 <http://www.bwk.tue.nl/iaps/>

Seniors' Design Principles Documents Under Development

The design of products and services to increase accessibility and usability for seniors is the focus of both national and international efforts of CSA International, the Canadian organization involved in standards development.

GRC Director Dr. Gloria Gutman is a member of a new technical committee, the Design for Aging Committee, formed in March under the jurisdiction of CSAI's Steering Committee on Public Safety. Its mandate is to develop a national design principles document for application to a broad range of products and services aimed at seniors. This document will assist designers, manufacturers, retailers, service industries seeking to improve customer service, and providers of programs that label products and services as "senior-friendly". Internationally, a guide for standards writers on the design of products, services and environments for older persons with disabilities is being developed through a Joint Technical Advisory Group reporting to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Management Board. Dr. Gutman and other members of CSA's Strategic Advisory Group on Aging (SAGA) are providing strong Canadian input to this initiative. For further information contact ian.brodie@csa-international.org (CSA guide) or jeanne.bank@csa-international.org (ISO guide).

FOOTNOTES

- 1) In some cases, it may be that they are simply less likely to come to the attention of police as victims of crime.
- 2) In 1993, 41% of seniors said that they felt somewhat or very unsafe when walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark, compared with 26% of those aged 45-64 and 23% of those in age groups under age 45. Criminal Victimization and Fear of Crime among Canadian Seniors. *Aging Vignette*, No. 4, <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/seniors/english/new.htm>
- 3) Ibid. In 1993, 57% of senior women reported feeling unsafe when alone in their neighbourhood streets after dark, compared with only 19% of senior men.
- 4) Zimring, C. M. & Reizenstein, J. E. (1980). Post-occupancy evaluation: An overview. *Environment and Behavior*, 12, 429-450.
- 5) Gifford, R. (1997). *Environmental Psychology: Principles and Practice* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- 6) *The World Health Report 1998: Life in the 21st Century, A Vision for All* (1998). World Health Organization: Geneva (page 209).
- 7) *Supportive Housing in Supportive Communities: The Report on the Supportive Housing Review* (September, 1999). Victoria, BC: Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security.
- 8) In 1995, 36% of people aged 65 to 74 and 46% of people aged 75 and over living in the community reported some level of activity restriction because of a long term health condition. *1999 and Beyond: Challenges of an Aging Canadian Society* (1999). The National Advisory Council on Aging: Health Canada (page 19).
- 9) *A Portrait of Seniors in Canada* (3rd ed.) (October 1999). Statistics Canada: Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.
- 10) *The World Health Report 1998: Life in the 21st Century, A Vision for All*. World Health Organization: Geneva (page 48).
- 11) *1999 and Beyond: Challenges of an Aging Canadian Society* (1999). The National Advisory Council on Aging: Health Canada (page 23).
- 12) *ibid*, page 42.
- 13) *ibid*, page 42.
- 14) Mary Ann Clarke Scott, MAIBC, Generations Architecture Planning Research, phone (604) 921-6508 or email generationsarch@home.com
- 15) John Zeisel and Patricia Baldwin conducted the CMHC commissioned research published in *Housing Options for People with Dementia* (1999). Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Conference News

Environmental Design Research Association



<http://www.telepath.com/edra/home.html>

edra's 32nd annual conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland July 3-6, 2001. The

conference organizers invite the participation of design educators and professionals, planners, social scientists, and others interested in the relationship of people and places

and the design and management of places that are responsive to human needs. edra's annual conference provides researchers, practitioners, and others with an opportunity to learn about the latest developments in the field of environmental design research, and to exchange information on the state of behaviour-oriented design and research. edra conferences qualify for AIA Continuing Education Credit.

Call for Participation and Submission! *Deadline* October 1st 2000.

In 2001, for the first time, edra will be joining forces with the International Association for People-Environment Studies (iaps) to co-host specific elements of the conference, bringing ever more potential for exchange of ideas to the many solutions to our environmental design problems

For information on joint edra-iaps symposia, contact Martin Edge by email: m.edge@rug.ac.uk

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<http://www.iahsa.org/iahsa/>

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KEY DATES

Early Bird registration
December 31, 2000

Abstract Deadline
December 31, 2000