

PhD Research | School of Design | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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Design and Ageing

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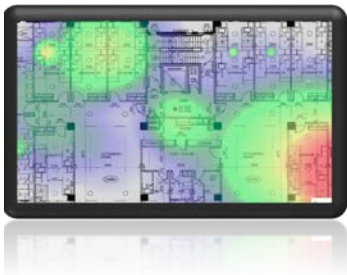
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PhD Title:

Living Together for Social Interaction: Design Factors of Senior Housing for the Third Age

Keywords:

Ageing population, long-term care, co-living, social interaction, location tracking

Research Abstract:

With the extended life expectancy, the ageing population is growing at a faster rate than children. One of the growing challenges is the lack of appropriate housing stock for older people to live independently in their home for as long as possible or *ageing in place*. Many ageing adults are living together to foster greater network and support. However, a fair number of these housing units are often poorly managed or designed.

The research aspires to construct a new framework of co-living for ageing in place. More specialised housing is urgently needed and the questions about how older people will live together have never been more relevant - *What resources are shared in a co-living environment? What are the design factors? What other factors are involved?* The study aims to address these questions by identifying the needs and behaviours of older people who live in long-term care facilities and examining design factors which encourage social interaction.

Research Methodology:

There are already a number of research on the design of nursing homes. However, little study explores the relationship between social behaviours and these design parameters through the use of location-tracking technology. Using two care homes as study sites, the research attempts to understand the residents' social behavioural patterns and how these behaviours are influenced by design factors in a co-living setting. Each resident is given a smartwatch to wear over a period of four weeks and location and movement data are collected. Data analysis compares the design factors between the two facilities and how they influence social behaviours of residents.

To identify behavioural patterns, the quantitative data analysis examines aspects of locations, distances, durations, frequencies and movement paths of single users and collectively as a whole. Thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews will be conducted in verifying the correlations between design of space and social behaviours.

Results/ outcomes:

1. Explore the relationship between social behaviours and design factors in space
2. Older people's perspectives on and design factors that affect co-living
3. Recommended framework for the design of co-living spaces for older adults