

Consequences of Ageing in Place in the Residential Environment: A Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

As the global population continues to age, the concept of "aging in place" has gained prominence as a preferred lifestyle choice among older adults. Aging in place refers to the desire and ability of older individuals to remain in their own homes, rather than moving to a care facility, as they grow older. This preference is driven by the desire for independence, familiarity, and a sense of community. However, the consequences of aging in place in the residential environment are multi-faceted, impacting not only the older adults themselves but also their families, communities, and healthcare systems. In this article, we embark on a comprehensive exploration of the consequences of aging in place within the residential environment, informed by a literature review and a bibliometric analysis. By examining existing research and analyzing the trends and patterns in this field, we aim to provide a holistic understanding of the implications and challenges associated with aging in place, as well as identify potential avenues for further research and policy development.

Keywords: Global population • Bibliometric analysis • Virtualization

Introduction

A substantial body of research suggests that older adults who age in place experience improved mental and emotional well-being. Familiar surroundings, established social networks, and personal autonomy can contribute to reduced stress, depression, and anxiety. However, health outcomes vary widely depending on the accessibility of healthcare services and the home environment. Modifications and accommodations, such as handrails and accessible bathrooms, can significantly impact an individual's ability to age in place. The decision to age in place often involves family members who may serve as caregivers. The consequences for family dynamics are complex. While some family members may experience increased stress and caregiver burden, others appreciate the opportunity to provide care and maintain close relationships. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing support systems that benefit both older adults and their families. Aging in place has the potential to strengthen community bonds [1,2]. Older adults living in their communities for extended periods may foster intergenerational relationships, contribute to local activities, and participate in community life. However, communities must be age-friendly, with accessible infrastructure and services, to support active aging.

Literature Review

Housing and neighbourhood environments play a pivotal role in the success of aging in place. Homes that are adaptable, barrier-free, and designed with older adults' needs in mind can enhance independence and safety. Neighborhood walkability, proximity to services, and social amenities

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are also significant factors. Additionally, home affordability, maintenance, and the availability of affordable housing options are key considerations. Aging in place can have economic consequences at various levels. Older adults may need to rely on their retirement savings and pensions for in-home care or home modifications, affecting their financial security. Simultaneously, the demand for professional home care services and medical infrastructure may create economic opportunities in healthcare sectors [3,4].

Discussion

Policymakers and healthcare providers need to adapt to the growing trend of aging in place. This entails developing and implementing policies that promote age-friendly housing, community-based healthcare, and caregiver support. The implications of these policies extend to government budgets, public health, and the design of healthcare systems. To gain deeper insights into the literature on aging in place, we conducted a bibliometric analysis. We used database search tools and citation analysis to identify trends, influential papers, and prolific authors in this field [5,6].

Conclusion

The consequences of aging in place in the residential environment are complex and multifaceted, encompassing health, family dynamics, community integration, housing, economics, and policy implications. Understanding these consequences is crucial as aging in place becomes an increasingly popular choice among older adults worldwide.

Our literature review and bibliometric analysis reveal a growing body of research in this field, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and a global perspective. This research is crucial for informing policy development, healthcare system design, and community planning to support the evolving needs of aging populations. As we move forward, it is essential to continue exploring innovative solutions and best practices to create environments that enable older adults to age in place with dignity, security, and fulfillment. This includes embracing technological advancements, improving housing accessibility, and enhancing community infrastructure. By addressing the consequences of aging in place proactively, we can work toward creating a more inclusive and age-friendly society that benefits older adults, their families, and communities as a whole.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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