The Influence of Social Engagement on Quality of Life among Older Adults Living in Senior Housing

Amy Restorick Roberts
PhD Candidate, MSSA, LSW
Quality of Life

The World Health Organization (1998) defines quality of life as:

“A broad, multidimensional concept that reflects the individual’s subjective perceptions of positive and negative aspects of life.”
Why do we care about quality of life?

Important to health & social functioning of all older people.

Poor quality of life is associated with:

• Worse functional health, depression, and memory problems
• Loneliness
• Social isolation
Continuing Care Retirement Communities

Change Lives
Change Communities
Quality of Life within CCRC’s

- Residents tend to be older & have smaller social networks
- Feelings of social isolation
- Quality of life, social activity, & well-being decreased over time
- Depression risk factors
  - Living in age-segregated residential facility,
  - Having chronic health conditions,
  - Physical frailty
Background of Existing Data

• Study of older adults who moved into senior housing within CCRC’s over 5 years (Erickson Life Study, from 2003-2009)
• Sample recruited from four CCRC’s from Maryland and northern Virginia.
• Baseline sample (N=300)
• Participants completed Erickson Resident Profile
  – Interview with a nurse or social worker 2 weeks after move-in and annually
Quality of Life Measure

• The Perceived Quality of Life Scale (Patrick et al., 2001) is a holistic measure of older adults’ overall assessment of their satisfaction with the “perceptions of their positions in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns” (Bonomi et al., 2000, Patrick et al., 2001, & WHOQoL Group, 1994).

• This measure assesses the social, physical, and cognitive dimensions of quality of life.
Examples of Items

Social Dimension (12 items):
• How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the kind and amount of recreation or leisure you have?

Physical Dimension (5 items):
• How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with how well you care for yourself, for example preparing meals, bathing, or shopping?

Cognitive Dimension (2 items):
• How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with how well you think and remember?
3 Types of Social Engagement

- Social Support Provided
- Social Support Received
- Formal Social Activity
Main Research Question

• Does social engagement influence changes in quality of life for older adults living in senior housing from move-in through their first 5 years?
Aims of Study

Model stability and change in quality of life for older adults residing in senior housing using the Erickson Life Study

• Explore the factors associated with change in quality of life over time,
• Model individual patterns in age trajectories of quality of life over time,
• Examine the influence of social engagement on quality of life over time.
Summary of Hypotheses

From the literature we know that quality of life tends to decrease over time as people reach more advanced age.

Each type of social support will positively influence quality of life to help people maintain a good quality of life, if not to increase quality of life for these older adults in CCRC’s.
Characteristics of Sample at Baseline

- 66% Women
- Average age of 76.9 years
- 56.7% married
- 52.9% bachelor’s degree or higher
- 3.1 medical conditions reported
- 67.5% rate health as “very good” or “excellent”
5 Years Later…

• Fewer married (widowhood)
• Increased number of medical conditions
• Less rate health as “very good” or “excellent”
• More dependence
• Increased level of engagement in group activities
Figure 1.
Average Quality of Life Scores over Time

Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5
---|---|---|---|---|---
8.5 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.2 | 8.1 | 8.0
8.6 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.2 | 8.1
8.7 | 8.6 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.2
8.8 | 8.7 | 8.6 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.3
8.9 | 8.8 | 8.7 | 8.6 | 8.5 | 8.4
9.0 | 8.9 | 8.8 | 8.7 | 8.6 | 8.5
9.1 | 9.0 | 8.9 | 8.8 | 8.7 | 8.6
9.2 | 9.1 | 9.0 | 8.9 | 8.8 | 8.7
9.3 | 9.2 | 9.1 | 9.0 | 8.9 | 8.8
9.4 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 9.1 | 9.0 | 8.9
9.5 | 9.4 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 9.1 | 9.0
9.6 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 9.1
9.7 | 9.6 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.3 | 9.2
9.8 | 9.7 | 9.6 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.3
9.9 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 9.6 | 9.5 | 9.4
10.0 | 9.9 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 9.6 | 9.5

Change Lives
Change Communities
Figure 2. Percent Satisfied with Quality of Life over Time
Figure 3. Quality of Life Average Subscale Scores over Time

- Social
- Cognitive
- Physical
Figure 4. Average Social Support Total Score over Time
Figure 5. Median frequency of socially supportive behaviors
Figure 6. Percentage of Respondents Expressing Interest in Providing More Social Support to Others
Potential Implications

1. Social engagement matters for quality of life.

• This study will tell us what type of social engagement matters most.
Potential Implications, cont.

2. This additional knowledge base can be used to develop interventions, programs, and environmental initiatives for CCRC’s and other community-based agencies serving older people.
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:

• Barbara Resnick, Ph.D, U. of Maryland Baltimore
• Jean Gaines, Ph.D., Erickson Living Foundation
• Erickson Living Foundation

Dissertation Committee Members:
Dr. Kathryn Betts Adams (Chair), Dr. M. C. “Terry” Hokenstad, Dr. Kathleen J. Farkas, Dr. Jung-won Lim, & Dr. Camille B. Warner
Questions?