

P18 - OPTIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN FOR PERSONS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

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Brief Description of Research or Project: A supportive environment (physical, social, emotional and spiritual) is a key social determinant of health, and identifies as a key component to full engagement within ones community. While good environmental design is vital to a person's wellbeing, it is often underrated or compromised in many care settings (1). Many elements affect a person's ability to manage and interpret their environment. As a person ages there are a number of "normal" age related changes that may be anticipated and adapted for; however, when these are coupled with problem solving and perceptual difficulties associated with a dementia, persons living with dementia especially need appropriate and supportive design interventions to assist with positive perceptions and interpretations of their environment(2). The Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange (AKE) Design and Dementia Community of Practice (CoP) has developed a series of knowledge translation tools that provide evidence-based (and tacit knowledge) recommendations for dementia and senior friendly environmental design (primarily physical and social aspects). Our series of knowledge translation tools include recommendations related to doorways, lighting, noise, wayfinding, and outdoor environments. The goal of the CoP is to promote the autonomy and well-being of persons living with dementia both in the community and in more institutional settings.

Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014? Our presentation will provide an overview of an evidence-based best practice series of Dementia- Friendly Design Knowledge to Practice Recommendations that highlight important physical and social design elements which promote the autonomy and well-being of persons living with dementia both in the community and in more institutional settings. These dementia-friendly recommendations provide rationales and strategies to better facilitate the process of persons with dementia and their care partners to make sense of their environment and improve wellbeing thus having a positive effect on mood and responsive behaviours. Participants will be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback and contribute to these living design documents during the presentation and receive an invitation for future discussions with the AKE Design and Dementia Community of Practice. (1) addresses the practical importance of environmental design qualities that promote health and wellbeing (2) addresses best practices related to quality of life for persons with dementia (e.g. recommendations based on current and emerging quality evidence and the integration of both practice-based and experiential knowledge of those caring for people with dementia)