

Successful Aging in Philadelphia: Examining the Needs of the Geriatric Community

Mollie Woehling, Dr. Rickie Brawer

Center for Urban Health, Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA

INTRODUCTION

- As more adults continue to live until older ages they will have a greater reliance on the formal aging care system and continue to use a large proportion of healthcare resources
- From 2000 to 2010, the US 65+ population grew 15.1% compared to the total population that grew 9.7%¹
- CDC estimates that adults who make it to 65 can expect to live for 19 more years, 14 of those in relatively good health²
- Adults 65 years and older comprise over 12% of the population of Philadelphia¹
- In 2002, 19% of Philadelphia's seniors 65+ lived in poverty, compared to 11% of seniors in the state of Pennsylvania³
- Affordable Care Act new requirement for 501 (c)(3) hospitals:
 - conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy at least once every three years
- An awareness of geriatric needs by health and social service planners and the city government will help focus on the areas where resources and services need to be allocated
 - Research Question:** What are the specific needs of the older population in Philadelphia that need to be addressed in order to facilitate successful aging?
 - Study Objectives:**
 - Conduct a small-scale needs assessment of the geriatric population in Philadelphia
 - Lay the groundwork for:
 - Development of more targeted surveys and assessment tools for future investigation
 - Policy and program development
 - Bolstering of aging services
 - Advocacy for the aging population
 - Making Philadelphia a more age-friendly city

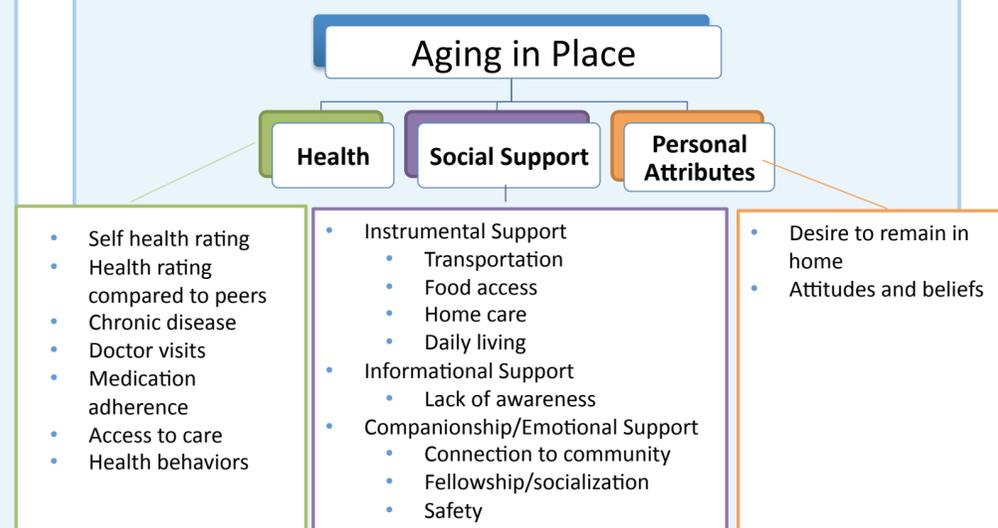


METHODS

- TJU IRB approved qualitative descriptive needs assessment
- 19 semi-structured one-on-one interviews
 - Participants:** 65+ years old and a resident of one of the TJUH community benefit area zip codes
 - Recruitment sources:
 - Philadelphia Senior Center (14)
 - JFMA clinic at Philadelphia Senior Center (1)
 - St. Elizabeth's wellness clinic (3)
 - Subscribers to Philly's LGBT Elder Initiative newsletter (1)
- Audio-recordings of interviews transcribed, *A priori* themes developed, and interviews coded for content analysis

RESULTS

Theoretical Framework:



Demographics:

- 8 males, 11 females
- Mean age: 73, range 65-85
- 42% African American, 42% Caucasian
- Marital status:
 - 32% single, 37% divorced, 26% widowed, 5% married/partnered
- Living situation
 - 47% live alone, 16% live alone sometimes, 37% live with >1 other

Key Themes:

Contrasting Themes About Future Planning	
Planning for the future (2 mentions)	"If I get to a point where I can't take care of myself, I have a choice to go live with my family or to go into a nursing home, or something like that." P17
Not planning for the future (5 mentions)	"Well, the way it's going now, I wouldn't want any changes." P11 "I don't look ahead. I take one day at a time 'cause tomorrow is not a promise to no one. Behold this day of good. Cause we never know what the next hours may be." P18

RESULTS

Themes About Connection to the Community	
Feeling part of society (1 mention)	"[Older adults] sort of become the shadows...they grey areas... this has always been a world of younger people...I think part of the problem is the seniors feel like they are extra in this society and that their value is not appreciated." P15
Not enough intergenerational mixing (4 mentions)	"A lot of people once they reach my age they mostly either in care situations or in residences and just surrounded by people their age. And I hope I don't ever have to do that...because I just want to stay as closely in touch with the community as I can." P02
Ageism/Stigma and elder disrespect (3 mentions)	"..looking for my job in my 50's... [after a phone interview that] went very well [the] manager called me in, and I could just see the look on her face... I'm not going to get this job. I could just tell as I walked in....It was just age. And that was not the only time." P02
Themes About Support	
Lack of knowledge of options for future (2 mentions)	"Well I get concerned about when I'm older, and I don't have kids, ya know, I don't know if there's any options." P16
Support for daily living from family and friends (9 mentions)	"I have my grandson come over, and he cleans. I just maintain. I do the basic stuff." P19

CONCLUSION

Key findings from the interviews include:

- A trend of apathy in regards to thinking about aging and future plans
- A desire to remain connected to the community, including to other generations
- Low use and awareness of organizational support compared to family and friend support

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Implement strategies to get older adults to plan for their aging future
- Bolster community involvement including association with younger generations
- Increase awareness of existing aging resources to augment the role of organizational support in the aging process

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