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Validating the Full and Short Versions of the Aging-in-Place Instrument for Native and Migrant Older Adults in the Netherlands

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STUDY PROTOCOL

Open Access

Age-friendly communities and well-being realization among older native and immigrant populations in the Netherlands: a theory-guided study protocol



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Abstract

Background: With rapid population aging, policy makers and service providers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of building and maintaining age-friendly communities. Clearly, "age-friendly" relates to the impact of context on people's well-being. But how? What is an age-friendly community, and does that differ for native and immigrant older people? Up until now, how native and immigrant older people in the Netherlands perceive community age-friendliness, and whether and how age-friendly communities help them realize well-being, remains unknown which limits opportunities to develop appropriate interventions. This article presents a study protocol to identify, theoretically and empirically, how and under what conditions age-friendly communities help native and immigrant older people in the Netherlands realize well-being.

We present a theory-guided approach to elucidate differences in neighborhood age-friendliness and requirements for age-friendly community development between native Dutch and immigrant older people. Good interventions are built on good theory. The proposed research will add to theory building by systematically examining what older people get from their neighborhoods and the conditions that influence well-being realization, including the role of individual and neighborhood resources. We posit that physical and social well-being realization will be enhanced in age-friendly communities that support realization of multiple well-being needs and development of solidarity within and between groups in the neighborhood via cross-cutting sharing arrangements.

Methods: We present a mixed-methods design among native and immigrant older people (Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan) consisting of: (i) Q-studies (combining in-depth interview-based and quantitative analyses); (ii) a pilot survey study; (iii) a main survey study in Rotterdam, the Hague, Utrecht, and Amsterdam; and (iv) focus groups.

Discussion: By exploring truly new ground in the field of age-friendly communities, the results of the proposed research will provide new empirical evidence, advance theory, and be helpful for the development of interventions aimed at improving age-friendliness and well-being for native and immigrant older populations, thereby contributing to resolving the societal challenges of caring for and supporting older people in the community.

Keywords: Older people, Immigrant, Theoretical model, Mixed-methods, Age-friendly communities, Well-being, Solidarity, Study protocol

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Why this research?

- Currently, the Netherlands is facing a **demographic** shift as its aging population is getting larger and becoming more **diverse**.
- Both native and migrant older adults wish to **age in place** in their familiar homes and environments.
- **Age-friendly** neighborhoods and cities can support older adults' ability to age well in place.

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Why this research?

- Migrants are often **excluded** from active involvement in age-friendly initiatives.
- Available instruments for the assessment of age-friendliness are largely **homogeneous** and not culturally adapted for use with diverse populations.
- There is thus lack of **quantitative** information about older migrants' needs for aging in place.

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Research aim

Developing an **instrument** that can be used with **diverse older-adult populations** in the Netherlands to evaluate neighborhood age-friendliness and identify aging-in-place needs.

How was the research done?

Instrument development

- Two versions were developed:
 1. 37-item version: comprehensive.
 2. 24-item version: easy to complete.
- Items are spanning the eight domains of the WHO's Age-friendly Cities Guide.

Participant recruitment

- Older adults aged ≥ 65 years.
- Native-Dutch, Turkish, Surinamese, and Moroccan backgrounds.
- Around 2000 potential participants in Rotterdam.
- Questionnaires were in Dutch, Standard Arabic and Turkish.

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Neighborhood resources



Outdoor space & buildings



Transportation



Communication & information



Housing



Respect & social inclusion



Social participation



Civic participation & employment



Community support & health services

The Aging-in-Place Instrument

2. English

The following questions relate to the neighborhood you live in.

We would like to know what you miss in your neighborhood in order to stay living there as long as possible.

All questions can be answered on a four-point Likert scale: 1, do not miss at all; 2, miss a little bit; 3, miss quite a lot; 4, miss a lot, or do not know/no opinion.

What I miss in order to stay living here as long as possible:

Outdoor spaces and buildings

1. A clean and well-maintained neighborhood.
2. A green neighborhood.
3. A neighborhood with wide sidewalks and safe crosswalks.
4. Public buildings with elevators that are easily accessible for wheelchairs and walkers.
5. A neighborhood without nuisance.

Transportation

6. A neighborhood with good public transport.
7. A neighborhood with affordable public transport.
8. A neighborhood with sufficient parking spots (for myself and/or my visitors).
9. A neighborhood that is easily accessible by car.
10. A neighborhood with good cycling paths.

Housing

11. A neighborhood with affordable housing.
12. A neighborhood with suitable housing for older adults.
13. A neighborhood where it is easy to find help with home and garden maintenance.

14. A sustainable home.

Social participation

15. A neighborhood where many social activities are organized.
16. A neighborhood with affordable activities for older adults.
17. A neighborhood with a meeting place for older adults.
18. A neighborhood with activities especially for people like me.
19. A neighborhood with a variety of events (such as block parties).

Respect and social inclusion

20. A neighborhood where people have respect for older adults.
21. A neighborhood with people with the same background as me.
22. A neighborhood where people know one another.
23. A neighborhood with friends and/or family close by.
24. A neighborhood with contact between young and old people.

Civic participation and employment

25. A neighborhood with opportunities for volunteer work.
26. A neighborhood where older adults are involved in changes in the neighborhood.
27. A neighborhood where older adults are able to influence what happens in the neighborhood.
28. A neighborhood where older adults are able to have their say.

Communication and information

29. A neighborhood newspaper with information about what is going on in the neighborhood.
30. A neighborhood with digital support (help with online banking, access to [DigiD](#), patient portal, etc.).
31. A neighborhood with understandable information about facilities and activities.

32. A neighborhood with municipal information at a central location.

33. A neighborhood where people inform one another.

Community support and health services

34. A neighborhood where home care is easily accessible.
35. A neighborhood with volunteers who provide help when necessary.
36. A neighborhood with the GP and pharmacy within walking distance.
37. A neighborhood with shops and other facilities within walking distance.

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How was the research done?

Analysis

- **Confirmatory** factor analyses.
 1. Full and short instrument with the **total sample**.
 2. Separate analysis for the short instrument with the **four subgroups**.
- **Reliability** analyses.
- **Construct** validity.

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Findings

- A total of 862 participants filled in the questionnaire.
 - Dutch respondents n = **300** (65% response rate).
 - Turkish respondents n = **211** (50% response rate).
 - Surinamese respondents n = **200** (45% response rate).
 - Moroccan respondents n = **151** (35% response rate).
- The aging-in-place instrument is **valid, reliable**, and **culturally sensitive** for use with **diverse** older adults to measure neighborhood age-friendliness and identify environmental needs for aging in place.

Confirmatory factor analysis results for the full and the shortened versions of the aging-in-place instrument

Model	SB χ^2	df	p	RMSEA	90% CI RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Model 1: 37 items (n = 862)	1726.440	601	<.001	.047	.045–.049	.901	.056
Model 2: 24 items (n = 862)	572.239	224	<.001	.043	.039–.047	.945	.065
Per subgroup							
Dutch (n = 300)	404.307	224	<.001	.052	.045–.059	.914	.071
Turkish (n = 211)	366.743	224	<.001	.055	.045–.065	.914	.086
Surinamese (n = 200)	364.145	224	<.001	.056	.046–.066	.901	.075
Moroccan (n = 151)	344.399	224	<.001	.061	.049–.073	.912	.072

Notes: SB, Satorra-Bentler; df, degrees of freedom; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CI, confidence interval; CFI, comparative fit index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual. The criteria used to determine model fit were RMSEA < .08, CFI > .90, and SRMR ≤ .10 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).



Findings

Measurement findings

- Resources in the *housing* and *social participation* domains were missed most by the target population.
- These domains need to be prioritized by age-friendly initiatives.
- Age-friendly initiatives need to account for the diversity of older-adult populations and their needs.

Housing

11. A neighborhood with affordable housing.
12. A neighborhood with suitable housing for older adults.
13. A neighborhood where it is easy to find help with home and garden maintenance.
14. A sustainable home.

Social participation

15. A neighborhood where many social activities are organized.
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Creating age-friendly communities for all

Creating communities that support the well-being of older people, both native and immigrant in the Netherlands

→ More information about NWO programme and this project

Duration: 1/9/2021 - 31/8/2026
Principal: NWO

Research

▾ [Spotlight projects](#)



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Questions?

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