

Feeling at Home in Old Age Homes and Satisfaction among Residents

Yitschak Shnoor Liana Issaq

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Related Myers–JDC–Brookdale Institute Publications

Shnoor, Y. & Mannheim, I (2017). *Regenerative community: Evaluation study*. RR-740-17 (Hebrew).

The report and English summary can be downloaded free of charge from the Institute website:
brookdale.jdc.org.il

Abstract

Background

Old age homes are long-term residential facilities that, while serving as the residents' home, are, nevertheless, an institution. Since the 1980s, the concept of old age homes has changed – rather than being seen as institutions, they are now perceived to be more of a home-like, social setting. The goal is to make the residents feel more at home and turn the facility into a home in every sense of the word.

The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services (MOLSA) is currently preparing for changing the concept of future old age homes. To this end, the ministry's Research, Planning and Training Division and Senior Citizens Division commissioned the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (MJB) to examine how old age homes are perceived by their residents and learn how they experience the facilities as a place to call home.

Study Goals

The study goal was to learn about the feeling of being at “home” among residents of old age homes under MOLSA's supervision and about the factors that contribute to this feeling. An additional goal was to examine a tool to measure the experience of home and determine whether it can be used routinely by MOLSA.

Study Method

The study included interviews with residents of old age homes and with family members of residents (not necessarily those whom we interviewed). Thirty old age homes were sampled from a list of homes under MOLSA supervision. Ten residents of each of these homes were sampled at random. They responded to a closed questionnaire administered by a team of MJB interviewers in face-to-face meetings. Altogether, 223 residents were interviewed (response rate 87.7%, of the potential respondents). The questionnaire included the EOH (Experience of Home) tool and tools to examine characteristics of cultural adaptation to the old age home and the residents' satisfaction.

The family members were taken from a list provided by MOLSA and the interviews with them conducted after they had given their consent to participate in the study. They responded to a closed

questionnaire administered by telephone by a team of MJB interviewers. The questionnaire included a tool to examine the family members' satisfaction with the care of their relative.

Findings

The average score for feeling at home was 3.76 (on a scale of 1-5). Correlation was found between the factors characterizing “cultural adaptation” (e.g., the ability to have some influence in the home, relationships with other residents, influence over food) and the feeling of being at home. We found moderate satisfaction in most of the satisfaction measures, and correlation between these measures (e.g., satisfaction with the room, the building, the activities, the attitude of the staff and the relationship with the management) and the sense of home. Greater prior knowledge about the home was found to improve the feeling of being at home. This was enhanced when residents had chosen the particular home out of a choice of several. Seldom feeling lonely was also associated with a strong feeling of being at home.

A multivariate analysis found that the main variables helping to explain the feeling of being at home were satisfaction with the room, with the food, with the activities, with the relationship with the staff, and with the personal care.

Conclusion

The findings show that the main factors likely to help the residents settle in to old age homes and improve their feeling of being at home are: prior knowledge about the place and the possibility of choosing the home from a selection of several others; satisfaction with the room and the food; a good relationship with the staff and other residents; and satisfaction with the attitude of the care staff and with the activities offered. The area of activities was found to be associated with almost all the measures of feeling at home. In response to the open questions, the respondents expressed a wish for improvement in this area. Other areas where relatively low satisfaction was found were the building and the relationship with the management. The EOH tool was found to reflect a range of aspects of this complex feeling and to be suitable for routine use by the Ministry. The study findings pave the way for planning old age homes in the future and for improving the feeling of being at home and the well-being of residents in existing old age homes.