

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21301) - HOMES TO AGE IN PLACE: A HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN APPROACH IN THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND

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Background and objectives

Housing for later life has been studied in depth in community-dwelling settings and post-crisis home adaptations, specifically when health deterioration affects the execution of Activities of Daily Living. Addressing the gap in research regarding preventive measures on housing for later living, the aim of this research is to understand how people adapt their home environments (design, adaptations and technology adoption) to plan ahead for ageing in place and find insights to improve the long-term experience in the built environment.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

This research presents a qualitative case study analysis of two households in the North of Scotland, using the Human-Activity-Space-Technology Model, describing preventive actions regarding housing decisions and analysis of choice. Each case study explores a different approach regarding housing (home adaptations and newbuild). The participants are homeowners and were recruited by approaching local community groups via snowball sampling.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The findings of this research reveal how people design and adapt their homes over time, as well as an analysis of catalysts to plan ahead and take actions that will benefit them in the future. Results also reflect on the status of adoption of technologies and analyse the use of energy and heating systems, detailing interactions and areas of opportunity for designing spaces and implementing interfaces to promote healthy living and support healthy ageing.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

This research provides insights to be implemented in the development of new housing stock, integrating smart home technologies to support people living independently at home to prevent and successfully face health changes that allow residents to age in place. These insights provide feedback to Builders, Architects/Designers and policymakers.

This work presents a novel approach using a prevention focus to create-adapt the home environment to reduce disruption in later living. The Human-Centred focus on People-environment studies can potentially impact positively residents' wellbeing, especially in rural settings.