

The Impact of Neighbourhood Built-Environment on the Formulation and Facilitation of Bottom-up Mutual Help Networks for Senior Residents in Singapore

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Abstract : Background: The world's demographics is currently undergoing the largest wave of both rapid ageing and dramatic urbanisation in human history. As one of the most rapidly ageing countries, Singapore will see about one in four residents aged 65 years and above by 2030 in its high-rise and high-density urban environment. Research questions: To support urban seniors ageing in place and interdependence among senior residents and their informal caregivers, this study argues a community-based care model with bottom-up mutual help networks and asks how neighbourhood built-environment influences the formulation and facilitation of bottom-up mutual help networks in Singapore. Methods: Two public housing communities with different physical environment and rich age-friendly neighbourhood initiatives were chosen as the case studies. The categories, participants and places of bottom-up mutual help activities will be obtained via field observation, non-structural interviews of participants, service providers and managers of care facilities, and documents. Mapping and content analysis will be used to explore the influences of neighbourhood built-environment on the formulation and facilitation of bottom-up mutual help networks. Results and conclusions: The results showed that neighbourhood design, place programming, and place governance have a confluence on the bottom-up mutual help networks for senior residents. Significance: The outcomes of this study will provide fresh evidence for paradigm shifts of community-based care for the elderly and neighbourhood planning. In addition, the research findings will shed light on meaningful implications of urban planners and policy makers as they tackle with the issues arising from the ageing society.

Keywords : Built environment, Mutual help, Neighbourhood, Senior residents, Singapore

Conference Title : ICUSPNM 2020 : International Conference on Urban Spatial Planning and New Models

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : November 17-18, 2020