

Wellness across different dimensions shown to facilitate independence in older adults

July 11 2018



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Maintaining wellness across different dimensions contributes to older adults' sense of independence, according to a University of Maine research team.

The team, led by Kelley Strout, a UMaine School of Nursing professor, conducted a study involving a random sample of 128 male and female U.S. residents age 65 and older living in communities in 22 states from national data.

Wellness of the individuals in the sample was measured using a Wellness Assessment Tool (WEL), which allows the individual to express interest in or intention to participate in [wellness](#) activities. Following a one-on-one assessment, the individuals were given the option to identify wellness priorities. These data were analyzed using a qualitative approach based on Hettler's Six Dimensions of Wellness.

The analysis found that older adults value and prioritize the dimensions of physical, social and emotional wellness over the dimensions of intellectual, occupational and spiritual wellness. Improving wellness in all dimensions contributes to older adults' sense of and ability to maintain [independence](#), "a lifestyle quality manifested vis-a-vis personal priorities related to the 6 original dimensions of wellness," according to the study.

The study found that wellness in even one [dimension](#) contributes to facilitating independence. For example, engaging in walking as a physical wellness activity facilitates the ability to walk independently.

"Independence represented the ability to engage socially with family and friends; to live according to their current standards; to remain at home, and to enjoy life," the article states.

The research recommends implementing community-based wellness interventions to support aging in place for older adults, focusing on marketing the interventions toward improving independence, rather than wellness, to reflect the adults' priorities and encourage participation.

The study on [older adults](#)' wellness priorities was published in *Healthy Aging Research*, an open-access journal that publishes articles on research advances in the understanding of the processes responsible for and associated with aging.

Provided by University of Maine

Citation: Wellness across different dimensions shown to facilitate independence in older adults (2018, July 11) retrieved 19 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-07-wellness-dimensions-shown-independence-older.html>

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