

Aging in place preserves seniors' independence, reduces care costs, researchers find

7 March 2011



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Credit: MU Sinclair School of Nursing

America's 75 million aging adults soon will face decisions about where and how to live as they age. Current options for long-term care, including nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, are costly and require seniors to move from place to place. University of Missouri researchers have found that a new strategy for long-term care called Aging in Place is less expensive and provides better health outcomes.

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The conventional sequence of long-term care forces older adults to move from their homes to senior housing, to assisted living and eventually to nursing homes as their health and functional abilities decline, said Rantz. The Aging in Place (AIP) model provides services and care to meet residents' increasing needs to avoid relocation to higher levels of care. AIP includes continuous care management, a combination of personalized health services with nursing care coordination.

In a four-year analysis of AIP, the total care costs for residents were thousands less than traditional care options. Costs for living and health care never approached the costs for [nursing homes](#) and assisted-living services. In addition, AIP residents had improved mental and [physical health](#) outcomes.

"The goal is to restore people to their best possible health so they can remain independent," Rantz said. "Once they are healthy, the additional care services are removed in order to minimize costs. AIP can be implemented by [health care facilities](#) and made available to seniors throughout the country."

AIP is used at TigerPlace, an independent living community that helps senior residents stay healthy and active to avoid hospitalization and relocation. Residents receive care services as they are needed and where they want them - in the privacy

of their apartments. MU researchers use sensors, computers and communication systems to discreetly monitor residents' health. Motion sensor networks detect changes in behavior and physical activity, including walking and sleeping patterns. Identification of changes can prompt interventions that can delay or prevent serious health events.

More information: The study, "Evaluation of aging in place model with home care services and registered nurse care coordination in senior housing," was published in the recent issue of *Nursing Outlook*.

TigerPlace is a joint project of the Sinclair School of Nursing and Americare, a long-term care company. For more information about AIP, visit: agingmo.com/

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

APA citation: Aging in place preserves seniors' independence, reduces care costs, researchers find (2011, March 7) retrieved 3 December 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-03-aging-seniors-independence.html>

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