The purpose of this study is to determine how the interior design of an older adult care setting affects residents’ socialization habits, safety, and perception of spaces. Using an online survey for participants over eighteen years of age, we asked different questions regarding existing amenities available within older adult care facilities, preferred amenities, socialization habits, safety concerns, and respondents’ perception of spaces with different design characteristics. Results of the survey show that different factors within the interior environment, such as differing amenities, the presence of vegetation or artwork, and both visible and invisible safety alert systems and equipment, all have a large impact on how residents and non-residents perceive these types of spaces and interact with their environment and each other.

**METHODS**

The methodology of this research included an online survey that was distributed to staff and residents of older adult care facilities within the Fargo area as well as the general public through social media. The survey included questions with a Likert scale, fill-in-the-blank, rank order, and choose-all-that-apply options for a total of 16 questions for participants to complete. The survey was open for a total of 14 days.

**RESULTS**

**AMENITIES & RESOURCES**

Of amenities currently accessible to resident respondents, the most common include a pharmacy (89%) and a gym/wellness center (89%). On the other hand, non-residents reported that an activity space (63%) and gym/wellness center (63%) were their top preferred amenities for themselves or a loved one in an older adult care setting.

**SOCIALIZATION**

Resident respondents most often preferred to socialize outside of their dwelling or apartment (56%), and that these residents were much more likely to meet up and socialize in spaces such as a bar/pub (29%), coffee shop/café (22%), or activity space (22%). Of these three spaces, residents are most likely to have access to an activity space (78%) or a coffee shop/café (56%).

**SAFETY**

Surprisingly, non-residents showed a much higher level of concern for all four safety risk categories (Slip & fall hazards, 84%; Poor lighting, 51%; Inadequate handrails, 66%; Safety alert technology, 70%), while residents were primarily concerned about a general lack of safety alert technology (22%).

**DISCUSSION**

After reviewing the data, we can consider how the findings would affect the interior design of an older adult care facility. The results of our survey, accompanied by the literature reviewed, indicate that incorporating nature in the built environment, both directly and indirectly, can have positive impacts on resident health and perceptions of the space. In addition, incorporating both visible and invisible safety alert systems will improve residents' safety sense of freedom, allowing residents to be independent. Other than encouraging health and independence, the design should also include various amenities that foster residents' preferred modes of socialization, whether they be through structured activities or casual interaction, in both public and private settings.

**REFERENCES**


