Which neighbourhood amenities mediate between depressive symptoms & older adults' psychosocial health?

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Aims
Ageing-in-place has attracted considerable policy interest due to fiscal and at times spatial necessity. One of its key underlying assumptions is that older adults’ health can be enhanced in and by their existing residential environment. However, this assumption is seldom tested.

This paper aims to test such assumptions to facilitate finding ways to intervene in the neighbourhood environment. Specifically, it examines how older people’s everyday neighbourhood experience (OpenX; Gan, et al., forthcoming) correlates with their psychosocial instead of physical health, given that the former was found to be more closely related to one’s neighbourhood environment (Gan, 2017).

Methods
Using data collected from Phase 1 of GRP-CARE survey involving N=270 older adults aged 60 and above living in Singapore’s public housing, multivariate linear regression found that older adults’ neighbourhood experience is positively correlated with their psychosocial health (Gan, et al, forthcoming). By joining this dataset with GIS data, this paper examines which of a list of more than 20 residential amenities or features mediate between OpenX and older adults’ psychosocial health.

Discussion
Whereas anthropologist Thang (2015) had noted the possible significance of multi-generational play areas to older adults’ wellbeing, the negative significance of clinics where payments can be paid via government subsidies, i.e., CHAS, is curious.

Conclusion
Some amenities partially mediate the relationship between one’s depressive symptoms and psychosocial health, suggesting possible causal pathways helpful to guide urban design interventions.

No amenities were found to mediate the relationship between one’s neighbourhood experience and psychosocial health, suggesting that neighbourhood quality (e.g., communal affordances, embeddedness) is much more closely related to psychosocial health than proximity to amenities.

Future Work
More qualitative research is needed to understand the role of these identified amenities. Longitudinal research is needed to study causal directions.

Bibliography

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