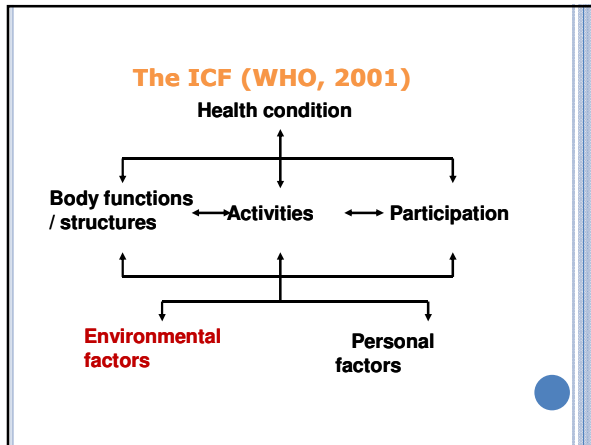


## HOUSING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

Julie Byles

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- Housing and communities can facilitate independence and community involvement as people grow older.
- As people age, housing and neighbourhood increasingly important because of increased vulnerability to environmental challenges.
- Chronic diseases, vision problems, limited mobility, and other impairments create special needs, but responsive environments can reduce the impact of these conditions. For example:
  - an elderly person who is no longer able to drive but lives in an area with public transport options has the ability to stay mobile well beyond the capacity of many in less well serviced communities.
  - a person with arthritis may or may not experience disability depending upon the degree to which their environment supports or impedes their activity and participation.

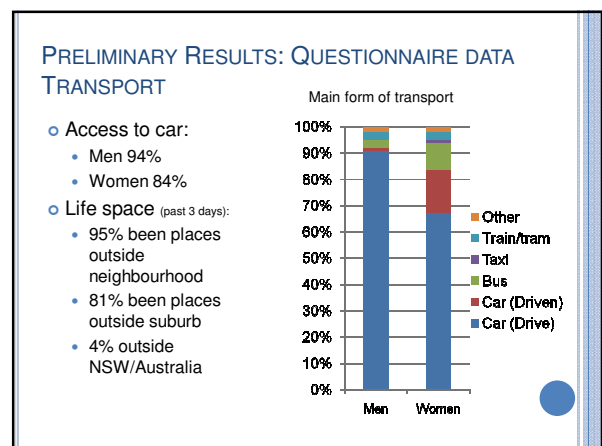
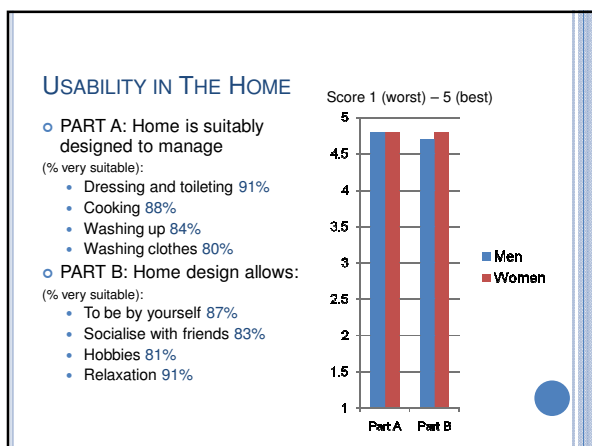
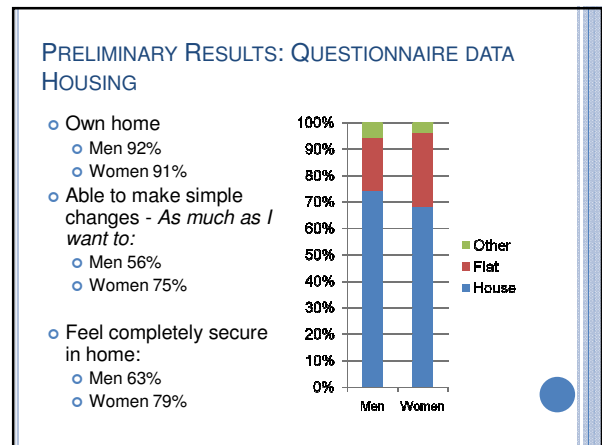
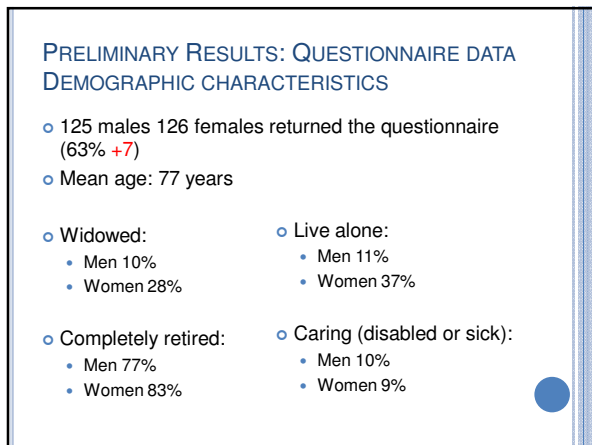
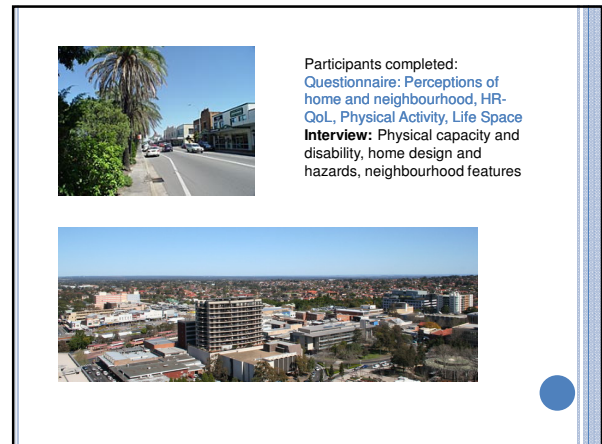
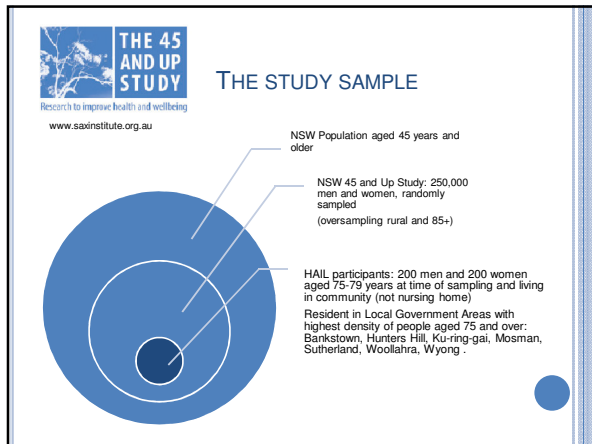


- There is currently very little information on the extent to which older people's homes and neighbourhoods are supportive of their increasing needs.**
- Bowling et al - *people aged 65 plus living at home in the UK – living in affluent areas, high perceived access to facilities, high neighbourhood satisfaction → higher levels of social activity, regardless of individual demographic and socio-economic characteristics.*
  - ENABLE-AGE project- *people aged 75-89 years living alone, in five European countries (Sweden, Germany, UK, Hungary, Latvia) - very old participants living in accessible homes, who perceived their home as useful and meaningful, and who thought that their housing was within their own control, were independent in daily activities, had better well-being, and had fewer depressive symptoms.*
  - *-The magnitude of accessibility problems, rather than the number of barriers, affected IADLs and subjective well-being in very old age.*
  - *- Both objective and perceived aspects of housing were related to well being.*

- ## HOUSING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (HAIL) PROJECT
- *to study home and neighbourhood environments of community dwelling older people,*
  - *to determine the extent to which these environments can be considered to be "supportive",*
  - *to identify those people who are least likely to be currently living in more supportive environments,*
  - *to contrast findings against people's expectations of their increasing needs as they age and of how these needs are to be met.*
- "supportive" environments are well designed to enable people to continue to be independent on activities of daily living despite increasing levels of impairment or disability. Features of such environments include homes that are *accessible, usable, and free from hazards*, and neighbourhoods that are *walkable, safe and accessible*.

## FEATURES CONSIDERED TO CONTRIBUTE TO "SUPPORTIVE" ENVIRONMENTS

Homes	Neighbourhoods
<b>Accessibility</b> – people are able to move around without hindrance from physical barriers. This aspect includes pathways and external access, corridors and circulation within the home.	<b>Accessibility</b> – distances to services, availability of suitable transport options.
<b>Usability</b> – people are able to perform their daily activities within their environment. This aspect includes features of universal design and physical aids that assist people to perform these activities.	<b>Walkability</b> – a measure of how friendly an area is to walk in. This aspect includes physical layout, hazards, personal safety and neighbourhood satisfaction.
<b>Safety</b> – the home is free from hazards that might contribute to falls and other accidents.	<b>Safety</b> – the extent to which people feel safe in their homes and local area, and able to trust their neighbours.

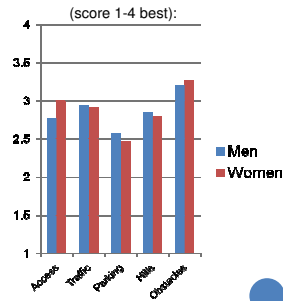


## ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICES, SHOPS, TRANSPORT

- Less than 30 minutes to nearest GP: 94% (men and women)
- Less than 30 minutes to nearest hospital:
  - Men 75%
  - Women 65%
  - Live alone 53%
  - Live with spouse 76%

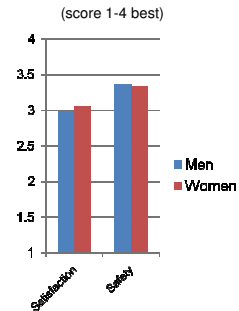
### Neighbourhood Walkability Scale

- Access to shops and transport
- Traffic Hazards
- Parking
- Hilliness
- Obstacles



## NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION AND SAFETY

- Neighbourhood satisfaction
  - Lot in common
  - Trust
  - Good friends
  - Involvement
  - My presence is notable
- Neighbourhood safety
  - Treated with respect
  - Children are safe
  - Safe to walk at night



## ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

SF-36	Usability A	Usability B	Access to shops, services, transport	Neigh'd satisfaction	Safety
Physical function	++	+		+	++
Role physical			++	+	+
Bodily pain			++		
General health	+	+	+	++	+
Mental Health	+			++	+
Role emotional				+	++
Social function	+		+	++	+
Vitality			++	+++	+

## SUMMARY AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

- High levels of perceived usability, accessibility, satisfaction and safety wrt homes and neighbourhoods
- Some gender differences, potentially related to living arrangements, housing type, ability to drive, differences in disability.
- Associations between QoL and perceived usability, access, satisfaction and safety
- Need to assess the relationship between subjective and objective measures of environment (and with QoL).
- Further study to analyse complexity of associations and interactions, and causal pathways
- Further research to understand how these factors change as people age and how they affect their independence, activity and participation.