

# Positive quality of life impacts through interactive social programs in long-term care

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## Background

- Elderly population is increasing, yet they are still an isolated population compared to other age groups.
- Elderly can perceive their placement in a nursing home setting as a signal of the approaching end of life, which can cause distress and shift in emotions negatively.
- The most common mental illness in elderly people is depression, which is often overlooked and untreated.
- Those who live in nursing homes are often limited to have interpersonal relationships with healthcare providers
- The inability to have vast social networks contributes to the negative influence on the well-being and quality of life measures for nursing home residents.

## Methods

- 14 studies were included in the research and analyzed using common schemes.
- The common schemes that were addressed were positive mental state, increased connections and interactions, engagement in activities, improved sense of purpose during tasks, and improved knowledge/ use of technology.
- Data collection measures included observation, interview, outcome measurements of teaching, engagement to assess the quality-of-life outcomes.



## Research Question

- The research conducted identifies the benefits of interactive communication programs for long-term care residents. These programs have different levels of frequency, which could affect the outcomes of the program. The hypothesis for this paper is that quality of life will increase when elderly residents are provided with social communication opportunities.

## Results

- Intergenerational programs collectively had the greatest impact on the residents when the program occurred more frequently and for a longer period. The impact on the quality of life that the intergenerational program has on residents is that it decreases depressive symptoms and increases motivation to communicate with others through structured tasks. The residents became more open to meeting the younger volunteers, grew in friendships, and learned to take perspective.
- The storytelling opportunities for residents showed to have the greatest impact on the quality of life when the programs had a longer duration and more frequent visits. After the post-intervention test, residents reported they felt an overall increased sense of worth, and self-health. Improved mental state, increased connections and interactions, and improved sense of purpose during tasks were all found to be prevalent.
- The technology programs varied from utilizing technology to learn to paint, to learning functional skills. The differing research addresses the technology acceptance among the elderly and how that can impact the quality of life. The literature discussed the benefits of a positive mental state, increased connections and interactions, and improved knowledge/ use of technology during tasks.

## Summary

- All programs- intergenerational, storytelling, and technology- are focused on fostering personal connections. They provide the residents to communicate in unique ways and learn from others even in their old age.
- The programs highlight the importance of connectedness throughout the lifetime.
- This study suggests that those residents with good quality of life may receive and give more positive emotions, companionship, and interactions with others.
- If all long-term care facilities worked to improve their quality of life through interactive programming, the residents would benefit immensely.

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