

1260

### **Home Usability among an Older Adult Community Dwelling Population and its Relationship with Health Related Quality of Life**

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**Background** In later life the home becomes the major context within which aging occurs. The extent to which the home supports or constrains one's daily activities, i.e. the home's usability, thus becomes significant. Home usability may influence one's quality of life and this study sets out to investigate this.

**Objective** To examine home usability among an older adult community dwelling population and its relationship with health related quality of life (HRQOL).

**Design** : A quantitative, cross-sectional survey.

**Subjects** 76 older adults, aged 65 and over from 6 Galway Active Retirement Associations.

**Measures** A demographic questionnaire, the Usability in My Home Instrument and the RAND Short-Form 36-Item Health Survey.

**Results** Home usability levels were generally high among this population but several usability problems were identified. Relationships were found between home usability and HRQOL. Personal and social aspects of usability were positively correlated with overall physical and mental HRQOL. Trends towards significance for a relationship between activity aspects of usability and overall physical HRQOL were identified.

#### **Contribution to the practice/evidence base for occupational therapy:**

A definite link exists between home usability and HRQOL. This reinforces the need for holistic intervention which considers not only the objective aspects of the environment (e.g. barriers) but the subjective aspects also, i.e. usability.