

## Feasibility and Effects of Preventive Home Visits for Older Adults

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**Introduction:** With many families and communities aging in unprecedented numbers, the search for preventive approaches to mitigate occupational decline, isolation and unwanted relocation by older adults is important. To that end, the preventive home visits (PHV) model uses a client-centered and occupation-centered approach to promote participation and well being of older adults. The model is derived from practice in Europe, particularly Denmark, where research on PHVs is mixed but generally supportive. Our research team is an academic and community partnership with international members, who are committed to the study of feasibility and evidence for a contextualized intervention guided by the culture and preferences of older adults and their families. Our model is informed by the International Classification of Function Disability and Health (WHO, 2002) and the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (AOTA, 2002/2008)

**Objectives:** Our goal is to develop a client-centered and cost-effective model for occupational therapy preventive intervention for community dwelling seniors who are at risk for decline.

**Methods:** The study, funded by the U.S. National Institute on Aging (#1 R21AG029502), is being conducted in several North Carolina counties. Investigators are using an experimental, repeated measures design with older (75+ years) community-dwelling adults. The experimental group receives the OT PHV intervention four times across 12 months. The comparison group receives mailings and phone calls. Established tools that measure function, participation, health, healthcare utilization, and satisfaction with life are used to test the intervention effects.

**Results:** As of April 2009, intervention is underway for all 110 participants and will conclude in 2009 for analysis of outcomes by May 2010. Feasibility in data collection and intervention delivery is very good with little missing data or attrition (6/110) to date.

**Conclusion:** This research project offers an innovative approach to preventing decline in occupational participation and involuntary moves. The feasibility and design have been successful thus far, and the intervention's effects and implications will be reported.

**Contribution to Practice:** This research project holds promise for evidence to support the PHV work done in Europe, and to expand preventive services in countries, such as the US, where occupational therapy's role in prevention is underutilized.