

Physical function and sense of autonomy determine life-space mobility in older people

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Physical function and sense of autonomy are independent determinants of life-space mobility in older people. This was found in a study conducted at the Gerontology Research Center of the University of Jyväskylä. In this project, 848 older men and women that lived independently in the Jyväskylä region in Central Finland were interviewed at their own home.

Provided by Academy of Finland

Life-space mobility reflects a person's mobility with or without the use of a vehicle. Life-space mobility reflects an individual's opportunities to participate in the society. An individual's life-space may be restricted to one room, while going outdoors, into the town or beyond increases one's life-space and thus affects a person's quality of life.

Sense of autonomy is the perception of control over one's life. Physical limitations may restrict a person's possibilities to participate in activities outside of their own home when and how they want to. Other factors such as being a care giver or availability of transportation may also influence sense of autonomy, Postdoctoral Researcher Erja Portegijs explains.

Both physical function and [sense of autonomy](#) affect a person's behavior. This means that we may need to pay attention to psychosocial factors, in addition to physical function, when evaluating a person's mobility or life-space for example in the clinical setting, Portegijs states.

The results were published online in an international scientific *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* on March 21, 2014.

More information: Portegijs E, Rantakokko M, Mikkola TM, Viljanen A, Rantanen T. Association Between Physical Performance and Sense of Autonomy in Outdoor Activities and Life-Space Mobility in Community-Dwelling Older People. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 2014 (early online). DOI: [10.1111/jgs.12763](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.12763)

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