

Guidelines Content: Housing Accessibility

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WHO
HOUSING
AND HEALTH
GUIDELINES



Outline

- Why accessibility
- The systematic review
- The recommendation
- Implementation issues
- Further research

Disability

- Disability is an umbrella term describing physical or psychological impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions
- At least 1 billion people, or 15% of the world's population, have some form of disability. The disabled population is increasing as the world's population ages.
- In some circumstances people with a disability have additional difficulty associated with the design and condition of their dwelling
- An accessible dwelling can improve a person's functioning within their home.

Why the concern with accessibility?

- Non-accessible home environments expose people with functional impairments to risk of falls and injuries, restricts social participation, negatively affects quality of life, and increases the burden on caregivers and external social services
- In the United States of America, it has been estimated that there is a 60% probability that any new house will be occupied by a person with a functional impairment over its life span

Bathrooms



– Steps





Systematic review

- Impact of accessible environments on:
 - Activities of Daily Living (Low to Moderate)
 - Falls/Injuries (Moderate)
 - Mortality (low)
 - Quality of life (low)
 - Psychological effects (moderate)

Guideline recommendation

- Based on current and projected national prevalence of populations with functional impairments and taking into account trends of ageing, an **adequate** proportion of the housing stock should be accessible to people with functional impairments.

- Strength of recommendation strong

Implementation

- Not many countries have mandatory requirements re accessible housing
- New and existing dwellings
- Voluntary or mandatory code
 - Builders and industry resists it
 - Can be a particular problems for renters

- **Cost effectiveness**
 - In ageing societies reduces accidents/falls
 - It also enables people to stay in their own housing longer which is cheaper than institutional care

Further research

- There are relatively few high-quality studies, with most studies to date being observational or small.
- The participants and types of intervention reviewed vary greatly. There are few studies conducted outside of high-income settings, and most of the research focuses on the experience of adults.
- Longitudinal studies, using standardized outcome measurements, are required to provide a stronger evidence base for the health and social benefits of home accessibility interventions.