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Factors Predicting Relocation Among Older Adults

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Factors Predicting Relocation Among Older Adults

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Having a greater understanding of what influences the older adults decisions to move and the characteristics of older adults who are more likely to move is valuable to help plan for the housing needs of the expanding older adult population. The authors examined how contextual, push and pull factors influence preferences of older adults to relocate. A total of 1,015 community-dwelling older adults completed a survey. Results of logistic regression analysis indicated the following variables as significantly related to relocation: gender, age, household income, province resided in, driving status, whether the current home met the older adult's needs, and unmet heavy cleaning needs. Policies and services need to focus on identification of those at most risk of relocation and support them either in their preference to age in place or through the relocation process.

KEYWORDS *housing options, moving, logistic regression, Canada*

Anticipating the needs of the aging population is paramount to ensuring that current and future programs and services are appropriate for seniors. The

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ability of seniors to maintain their independence and a high quality of life is largely dependent on having access to appropriate and affordable housing. Therefore, it is more important than ever to develop a better understanding of the housing decisions of older adults in Canada and the factors that contribute to these decisions because this understanding is essential to plan appropriate housing for the increasing senior population (Moen & Erickson, 2001; Tinker, 1997; Wister & Gutman, 1997).

The majority of Canadian seniors live independently in their own homes, and they wish to do so as they age (Shiner, 2007; Wagnild, 2001; Weeks, Bryanton, & Nilsson, 2005). Nevertheless, the possibility of living in some form of collective dwelling increases with an individual's age. In 2004–2005, more than 150,000 Canadian seniors were living in a residential care facility (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). Thus, we do know that many older adults will move, and we need a greater understanding of what influences their decisions to move.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers have used a variety of theories to conceptualize the living arrangements and migration patterns of older adults. For example, place attachment theory has been used to conceptualize individuals' affinities for certain dwellings and communities (Hay, 1998; Sugihara & Evans, 2000). Using migration theory, Lee (1966) was one of the first to propose that competing forces determined not only an individual's current residence, but also decisions regarding future migration. In our study, a theoretical model of the antecedents and sequelae of living arrangements in later life is used to conceptualize older persons' decisions surrounding future housing preferences (Haas & Serow, 1993; Hays, 2002; Wiseman, 1980) and is helpful in examining the complexity of variables involved in determining housing decisions of older adults.

This model suggests that certain key events that may occur in later life lead to an evaluation of one's current living conditions. These changing circumstances include triggers that involve push factors and pull factors, as well as contextual factors that encompass background circumstances (Hays, 2002; Wiseman, 1980). Push factors include any event that creates a disconnect between the individual and their current residence (Haas & Serow, 1993). Examples of push factors that can influence an older adults' decision to consider future housing options include increased health needs, the death of a spouse, and abrupt changes in income. Pull factors include the apparent benefits of retirement or long-term care communities and close ties to an original dwelling, such as a hometown, that may lead to return migration (Hays, 2002). Contextual factors are those elements that stabilize or change a person's living arrangements and include things such as one's gender, race, and cohort; achievements and early life experiences; and life circumstances in old age (Haas & Serow, 1993; Hays, 2002).

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In this analysis, we investigated the influence of four groups of factors on the relocation preferences of older adults, which included sociodemographic characteristics, health, the current housing situation, support from family and friends, and paid supports on future housing preferences of seniors, which are documented in the research literature to be particularly associated with relocation among older adults.

Se concentre sur 4 groupes de facteurs = plus déterminant selon littérature

Sociodemographic Characteristics

Many sociodemographic factors can influence the housing situation of seniors, such as financial status, marital status, living arrangements, the presence of adult children in the home, and geographic location (Vanderhart, 1995; Wagnild, 2001). For example, studies have shown that financial stability plays a major influence on the future housing needs and preferences of older adults (Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2003; Hayward, 2004; Ostrovsky, 2004; Vanderhart, 1995). Hayward (2004) observed mixed results in previous studies investigating the relationship between income and residential mobility of seniors. Several researchers showed that older homeowners with lower incomes are less likely to move than those with a higher socioeconomic status (Hayward, 2004; Ostrovsky, 2004; Vanderhart, 1995). In another study, Ostrovsky (2004) suggested that seniors with lower incomes are less likely to relocate due to high moving costs. For example, through an examination of the Ontario Longitudinal Study of Aging, Hayward (2004) found that seniors who had previously held blue collar jobs were less likely to move in later life compared with seniors with white collar positions. However, other researchers suggested that low income seniors are more likely to relocate due to an inability to continue the upkeep of their home and many seek assistance and support by moving closer to their adult children (Ostrovsky, 2004; Vanderhart, 1995, 1998). It is clear that the relationship between income and the future housing preferences in seniors requires further exploration.

moins de \$ moins tendance à déménager, car trop cher. Ou déménage plus car peux pas payer soins dom.

Several studies have also investigated the role of non-financial aspects of homeownership, such as marital status and living arrangements on the housing status of seniors. Researchers have shown that the death of a spouse is a major predictor of residential mobility in later life (Bloem, van Tilburg, & Thomése, 2008; Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). For example, Bloem et al. (2008) found that older adults who were widowed were more likely to move into adapted housing, such as housing specifically designed for older adults. Furthermore, they found that older adults who were both widowed and had health problems were more likely to relocate to institutional forms of housing such as nursing homes. Bloem et al. (2008) posited that when spouses who once played a major caregiver role died, the ailing partner was then forced to move into an institutional setting. Therefore, they stressed the importance of continued attention on the caregiving role of spouses.

Geographic location is also a major factor that influences later life migration. Seniors are overrepresented in rural areas (Canada Mortgage

and Housing Corporation [CMHC], 2003; Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006), and a large number of Canadian seniors reside in rural areas with little or weak metropolitan influence (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). Although services have been developed so seniors can choose to live independently, these supports are largely located in urban areas of Canada (CMHC, 2003; Jennissen, 1992). However, many rural seniors do not possess a driver's license, making it difficult for them to access the services and supports that they need (Jennissen, 1992). In addition to geographical isolation, many older adults contend with rural homes built prior to 1941 that have high heating and utility bills (CMHC, 2003). Older adults who live in rural communities are often more likely to perceive difficulties staying in their own homes than those living in urban areas (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006), and researchers have found higher residential mobility rates among older adults living in rural areas than in urban areas (Sergeant, Ekerdt, & Chapin, 2008; Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006).

Health

Health-related factors have a strong influence over an individuals' ability to stay in their home as they age (Doherty & DeWeaver, 2002). However, the role of health-related factors on residential mobility is not always straightforward (Hayward, 2004). Individuals in good health may be motivated to relocate for better amenities, whereas those who are in poor health often relocate to seek both paid and unpaid support (Hays, Pieper, & Purser, 2003; Hayward, 2004). To further complicate our understanding of the relationship between health and later life migration is the fact that there are many older adults who are in poor health but do not have the resources required to make a long-distance move (Hayward, 2004).

There is often concern that moving may have a negative effect on an older adult's health; however, there may be few health consequences surrounding later life migration. Chen and Wilmoth (2004) showed that although moving may increase difficulties with activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living around the time of the move, the effect seems to disappear over the long term, perhaps due to a better overall fit of the new home with respect to mobility and function needs.

Current Housing Situation

It is clear that the current housing situation can affect relocation among older adults. However, this factor tends to be overshadowed by other factors, such as income and health status. The key factor related to the current home and relocation is the adequacy of the physical space. More than one-third of older adults are concerned about the design of their home or their ability to function in their home (Wagner, Shubair, & Michalos, 2010). Thus, the need for home modification is a pressing issue for many Canadian older adults that could result in relocation. In addition, there is an influence on home

ownership status and relocation. Renters are much more likely than owners to relocate, and those who are mortgage-free are particularly unlikely to move (Robison & Moen, 2000).

Unpaid and Paid Supports

Despite the need for continued research on the relationship between health and later life migration, it is often health status combined with the availability of support from family and friend caregivers that influences the housing situation of older adults. Individuals who receive care from family and friends have a reduced incidence of institutionalization (Hays et al., 2003). However, many factors influence the ability of these networks to provide adequate care for older adults. For example, care needs, the length of time that the support is needed, and the many stressors that the individual encounters in everyday life all influence the quality of care provided.

The majority of older adults living in an institutional setting do not have caregivers who could meet their needs at home (Doherty & DeWeaver, 2002). In particular, those with cognitive disabilities are more likely to require paid supports, such as living in an institution, than those without cognitive disabilities (Hays et al., 2003). A variety of paid services are valuable in supporting seniors who wish to remain living in the community and in assisting unpaid caregivers, such as home care and adult day programs.

Aims of this Study

Although it is clear from the available research that sociodemographic characteristics, health status, support of family and friend caregivers, and the availability of formal care services influence the housing situation of seniors, the extent to which these factors contribute to future housing preferences is unclear. Having a greater knowledge of the key factors that influence relocation can help guide the development of policies that most effectively support seniors and their caregivers and the development of housing and support services to meet their specific needs. In this study, we examined the following research question: To what extent do sociodemographic characteristics, health, and unmet support needs influence relocation preferences among older adults?

METHODS

Participants and Recruitment

Criteria for participation included being aged 65 years and older and living independently in the community (i.e., not living in an institutional setting such as a nursing home, prison, or hospital) in four Canadian provinces. Random procedures of selecting participants were maintained in each of the four provinces. In three provinces, the Department of Health randomly

selected participants from the provincial Medicare database. In one province, we could not obtain a random sample from the provincial Medicare database, so random digit dialing was used to obtain a random sample.

We mailed each potential participant an information letter explaining the project and inviting their participation, as well as a reply form with a postage-paid envelope. Several weeks after the initial mailing, a follow-up letter was sent to those individuals on the list who had not returned reply forms. A package that included a survey, a cover letter, and a postage-paid envelope was sent to every individual who returned a reply form. Of the 8,880 surveys sent, 1,670 usable surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 19%. This analysis is based on the results of 1,015 survey respondents as we removed data from several participants, primarily due to missing data.

Survey

The Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance (ASHRA) received permission from the CMHC to use and adapt the 1998 Seniors' Housing and Support Services Survey. With the assistance of stakeholders in each of the four Atlantic Canadian provinces, we adapted the survey using a determinants-of-health approach; addressed the unique issues, languages, and cultures in Atlantic Canada; and made the survey conducive to being mailed to seniors to complete on their own, instead of in a face-to-face interview format. We made revisions following piloting the survey with 42 seniors. The final survey contained sections concerning current housing and living arrangements, feelings about various housing options, transportation needs, difficulties with personal care and activities of daily living, support services, future housing plans and needs, and demographic information including detailed financial situation questions. The pilot results indicated that respondents required a mean of 1 hour to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

The dichotomous dependent variable, whether participants would seriously consider at least one housing option other than their current dwelling type, was measured by combining the yes and maybe responses to at least one of eight possible dwelling types. Combining yes and maybe is consistent with others studies that analyzed data from the original instrument (Weeks, Bryanton, & Nilsson, 2005; Wister & Gutman, 1997). These dwelling types are located in Table 1.

The independent variables consisted of categorical predictor variables identified in the literature as potentially influencing future housing choices. The predictors included variables in the following categories: sociodemographic characteristics (i.e., sex, marital status, age, income, province), health

variable
dépendante

variable
indépendante

TABLE 1 Future Housing Options Included Requiring Relocation

Housing Option	Description
Garden suite	Small self-contained houses that are placed on the same lot as the home of a close family member. They are designed for seniors who want to live close to their family while maintaining their independence and privacy.
Sheltered housing	Housing that consists of self-contained apartments or small one-storey homes that are clustered in projects of 20 to 50 dwelling units. A key feature is that each unit is linked to the project manager by an alarm system.
Special retirement housing	A housing development specially built for seniors but not a nursing home.
Congregate housing	Residents have their own private apartments which usually include a kitchen so they can prepare light meals. They eat main meals in a communal dining room. Usually, housekeeping and personal care services are also usually included as part of the accommodation package.
Move to smaller home	Sell home and buy a smaller single-family detached house.
Mobile home	Mobile home or other manufactured housing in a planned retirement community.
Abbeyfield house	Usually 7–10 seniors move into a house where they each have a private room and share one or more meals a day and the services of a housekeeper in a family atmosphere. The house is acquired and operated by a non-profit society but the residents share in the operation of the house.
Co-op housing	Purchase shares in co-operative housing.

status (i.e., chronic health conditions, health status of partner, ability to drive, difficulties with activities of daily living), current housing situation (i.e., type of current home, whether needs are met by current housing, owning or renting), and unmet support needs from either family or friends or paid supports (i.e., errands, repairs, cleaning). These unmet needs indicate that supports are needed but are not provided. Although a large number of predictor variables were included in the model, recommendations by Peduzzi, Concato, Kemper, Holford, and Feinstein (1996) suggested that at a minimum of 10 events per variable be included in logistic regression analyses. With our sample of more than 1,000 participants, we are well above the recommended guidelines and do not believe the large number of predictors had an impact on our results.

Using SPSS version 15 software (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, Illinois), after testing for multicollinearity, a stepwise logistic regression was conducted using the aforementioned variables. Logistic regression generates odd ratios (OR) that indicate the likelihood of a variable affecting the outcomes taking the role of all other hypothesized variables into account. Given that this study aimed at building a model that outlines the factors affecting the decision to relocate rather than testing an existing model on such issues (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), the use of a stepwise method was preferred.

TABLE 2 Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Sample Compared with the Population

Variable	Survey Sample		Atlantic Canadian Census ^a		% Variance
	No.	%	No.	%	
Sex					
Women	953	57.9	190,030	56.5	+1.4
Men	694	42.1	146,260	43.5	-1.4
Age					
65-69	555	34.4	99,420	29.6	+4.8
70-74	440	27.2	81,210	24.1	+3.1
75-79	325	20.1	64,190	19.1	+1.0
80-84	175	10.8	48,410	14.4	-3.6
85+	120	7.4	43,060	12.8	-5.4
Location					
Urban (city or town)	855	53.2	185,365	55.1	-1.9
Rural	753	46.8	150,905	44.9	+1.9
Marital status					
Married/common law	1071	64.9	183,575	54.6	+10.3
Widowed	425	25.8	106,685	31.7	-5.9
Divorced/separated	104	6.3	24,475	7.3	-1.0
Never married	50	3.0	21,585	6.4	-3.4
Health status					
Very poor, poor, fair	526	32	94,998	33.5	-1.5
Good, excellent	1116	68	188,921	66.5	+1.5
Income					
Less than \$20,000	306	20.6	53,830	58.5	-37.5
\$20,000-\$39,999	706	47.4	26,915	29.2	+18.2
\$40,000-\$59,999	294	19.8	7,380	8.0	+11.8
\$60,000 or more	182	12.2	3,970	4.3	+7.9
Home ownership status					
Own	1259	75.8	166,580	78.4	-2.6
Rent	279	16.8	45,870	21.6	-4.8
Other	122	7.4	-	-	+7.4

^aThe data were drawn from the 2005 and 2006 census data.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

We determined how **representative** our survey sample was compared with the population by comparing the characteristics of our sample to Statistics Canada census data (Table 2). This comparison indicated that in general, the ASRHA **participants are comparable with the Atlantic Canadian senior population**, especially for sex, age, urban or rural location, health status, and homeownership status. We had a slightly younger survey sample than the population, with 5.4% fewer participants in the 85 and older category compared with the population. We also had more (10.3%) survey participants who were married or in a common-law relationship than in the population, and we undersampled widowed seniors (5.9%). The largest difference occurred for income level, with our sample including far fewer older adults

in the lowest income category compared with the population (37.5%), and consequently, higher proportions in higher income categories.

Table 3 includes the sociodemographic, health, and housing characteristics of the participants included in the logistic regression analysis ($n = 1015$). The sample included a slightly larger proportion of women ($n = 577$, 57%) than men ($n = 438$, 43%), and most were either married or in a common-law relationship ($n = 681$, 67%) or widowed ($n = 238$, 23%). Two-thirds were younger than 75 years ($n = 666$). Household income ranged widely, although 17% ($n = 177$) had an income less than \$20,000 per year. The older adults lived in each of the four Atlantic Canadian provinces, with a slightly lower proportion living in Nova Scotia and a slightly higher proportion living in New Brunswick. Many of the older adults ($n = 719$, 71%) had at least one chronic health condition, but most ($n = 825$, 81%) had no difficulty completing any activities of daily living. Approximately 20% ($n = 199$) had changes in their health status in the past year. A total of 81% ($n = 820$) were current drivers. Most participants lived in a single-family home ($n = 812$, 80%), owned their home ($n = 810$, 80%), and lived in that home year-round ($n = 956$, 94%). The amount of time lived in their current home varied, with one-quarter ($n = 250$) who had lived in their home less than 10 years and one-quarter ($n = 267$) who had lived in their home for 40 years or more. Almost all of the older adults ($n = 933$, 92%) said their needs are met by their home, but 32% ($n = 329$) modified their home to make it more accessible. A total of 16% ($n = 158$) said they have unmet needs for house repairs and 7% ($n = 72$) have unmet needs for yard work. A total of 714 (70.3%) of the older adults indicated seriously considering at least one of the housing options listed in Table 1 for the future.

Predictors of Relocation

The overall logistic regression model was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 98.226$, $p < .001$) and correctly classified 72.6% of cases. As indicated in Table 4, the significant sociodemographic characteristics were sex, age, province, and household income. The results indicate that the men in the sample were less likely to consider another housing option than women (OR = .879). Those in the three youngest age categories (65–69, 70–74, and 75–79 years) were more likely to consider another housing option than those 85 years and older. For example, those 65–69 years were almost three times more likely to consider another housing option than seniors in the oldest age category of 85 years and older. It is interesting to note that although seniors in each of the younger age categories were more likely to consider moving than the oldest age category, the OR become smaller as age increases. Thus, the model indicates that as age increased, older adults were less likely to choose relocation. The province of residence also emerged as significant, but only

Femme plus tendance à envisager déménager.
Plus jeunes (65-79) envisage plus à déménager.

TABLE 3 Variables Included in the Logistic Regression Analysis ($N = 1015$)

Characteristic	No.	%
Sex		
Male	438	43.2
Female	577	56.8
Marital status		
Married, common law	681	67.1
Widowed	238	23.4
Divorced, separated	65	6.4
Never married	31	3.1
Age		
65–69	386	38.0
70–74	280	27.6
75–79	189	18.6
80–84	91	9.0
85+	69	6.8
Income		
Less than \$20,000	177	17.4
\$20,000–\$39,000	491	48.4
\$40,000–\$59,000	219	21.6
\$60,000+	128	12.6
Province		
New Brunswick	332	32.7
Newfoundland & Labrador	244	24.0
Nova Scotia	201	19.8
Prince Edward Island	238	23.5
At least 1 chronic health condition		
Yes	719	70.8
No	296	29.2
Difficulty completing at least one activity of daily living		
No difficulty with activities of daily living	825	81.3
Fairly serious difficulty with at least 1 activity of daily living	132	13.0
Very serious difficulty with at least 1 activity of daily living	58	5.7
Changes in health status in the past year		
Yes	199	19.6
No	816	80.4
Respondent drives		
Yes	820	80.8
No	195	19.2
Type of current home		
Single family house	812	80.0
Apartment, multiplex complex	96	9.5
Other: mobile home, in-law suite, semi-detached	107	10.5
Years in current home		
Less than 10	250	24.6
10–24.9	252	24.8
25–39.9	246	24.2
40–54.9	213	21.1
55+	54	5.3
Live in home year-round		
Yes	956	94.2
No	59	5.8
Respondent owns their own home		
Yes	810	79.8
No	205	20.2
Needs are met by current home		
Yes	933	91.9
No	82	8.1

(Continued on next page)

TABLE 3 Variables Included in the Logistic Regression Analysis ($N = 1015$) (Continued)

Characteristic	No.	%
Has modified home to make it more accessible		
Yes	329	32.4
No	686	67.6
Unmet needs for house repairs		
Yes	158	15.6
No	857	84.4
Unmet needs for yard work		
Yes	72	7.1
No	943	92.9

TABLE 4 Logistic Regression Model Predicting Relocation Preferences

Variable	B	SE	Wald	DF	P	OR	95% CI
Age							
65–69	1.083	.294	13.589	1	.000	2.954	1.661–5.255
70–74	.868	.297	8.515	1	.004	2.382	1.330–4.266
75–79	.731	.304	5.765	1	.016	2.077	1.144–3.772
80–84	.259	.343	.571	1	.450	1.296	0.661–2.541
85+ (R)							
Overall			19.785	4	.001		
Household income							
Less than \$20,000	-.642	.275	5.448	1	.020	.526	0.307–0.902
\$20,000–\$39,000	-.143	.236	.369	1	.543	.866	0.545–1.376
\$40,000–\$59,999	.147	.270	.296	1	.586	1.158	0.682–1.965
\$60,000 or more (R)							
Overall			11.473	3	.009		
Province							
NB	-.305	.207	2.166	1	.141	.737	0.491–1.106
NL	-.891	.215	17.174	1	.000	.410	0.269–0.625
NS	-.254	.233	1.194	1	.275	.776	0.492–1.224
PE (R)							
Overall			19.830	3	.000		
Status of current dwelling meeting needs							
Needs are not met by current dwelling	.721	.308	5.476	1	.019	2.056	1.124–3.761
Needs are met by current dwelling (R)							
Sex							
Male	-.432	.154	7.839	1	.005	.879	.480–.879
Female (R)							
Driving Status							
Does not drive	-.524	.194	7.332	1	.007	.592	.405–.865
Drives (R)							
Help with heavy/spring cleaning							
Needs met for help with heavy/spring cleaning	-.660	.262	6.344	1	.012	.517	.309–.864
Unmet needs for help with heavy/spring cleaning (R)							
Constant	1.470	.456	10.401	1	.001	4.350	–

SE = standard error; OR, odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; R = reference category

for Newfoundland and Labrador. Older adults in this province were less likely (OR = .410) to consider another housing option than seniors in Prince Edward Island. Income emerged as significant between the two extremes in that those with the lowest household incomes (less than \$20,000) were less likely to consider another housing option than those in the highest household income category (\$60,000 or greater).

The only predictor of health that emerged as significant was driving. Seniors who do not drive were less likely to select another housing option (OR = .592) compared with those who do drive. One predictor related to current housing situation was significant. If the respondent's current home did not meet their needs, they were twice as likely to select another housing option. Finally, one variable related to support needs was significant. Those who have unmet needs for help with heavy/spring cleaning were more likely to consider another housing option (OR = .517).

femme déménage + --> car

DISCUSSION

homme plus encore en copule
donc moins vouloir quitter

The results of this study are useful in identifying factors associated with relocation preferences and can be divided into contextual, push, and pull factors (Hays, 2002; Wiseman, 1980). The contextual factors related to relocation are gender and age, whereas the results related to push factors are income, driving status, whether the home met current needs, and unmet support needs surrounding heavy or spring cleaning. Province of residence and driving states can be categorized in variety of ways as a contextual, push, or pull factor.

Although the contextual factors related to relocation cannot be influenced by the individual, they are important to acknowledge because supports can be put in place for those in need. Women and those younger than 80 years were more likely to wish to relocate. Older men were more likely to be married, and thus have more support, than older women, due to women typically marrying older men and women's longer life expectancy, which may have influenced men being less likely to desire relocation. Because women were more likely to prefer relocation than older men, it is important for practitioners to support them if they remain living in their own homes, especially if there are few, if any, other housing options available for them. Importantly, the results indicate that respondents in the oldest age category are less likely to prefer relocation; however, as we know, the chances of relocation increase with age, and especially after widowhood (Chevan, 1995; Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). This creates a particular need for support for older adults who are relocating, especially when it is not desired.

Although province of residence is a contextual factor, it can also be a pull factor where older adults are influenced by particular issues or policies within a province. Respondents in Newfoundland and Labrador were less

likely to consider relocation. In this highly rural province with many older adults living in remote locations, this finding is rather unexpected given that prior findings show higher residential mobility rates among older adults living in rural areas compared with those living in urban areas (Sergeant et al., 2006). However, more than one-third of the participants in our sample had completed home modifications to allow them to remain living in their homes longer, and some jurisdictions are allocating resources to assist older and disabled adults with the cost of home modifications. For example, in 2007, the province of Newfoundland doubled their provincial budget for their provincial home repair program, committing 24 million dollars over a period of 7 years (DaSilva, Fenn, McDonald, & Stewart, 2009), and utilization of this program may have influenced respondents in our sample to desire to remain living in their own homes rather than considering relocation. Thus, policies in a particular jurisdiction can allow older adults to remain in their own homes longer, or alternately, serve as pull factors in encouraging relocation by publicly supporting assisted living facilities for low-income seniors, such as in Prince Edward Island (DaSilva et al., 2009).

We found that lower-income seniors were less likely to consider relocation, and this is consistent with findings from other studies (Hayward, 2003; Ostrovsky, 2004; Vanderhart, 1995; Tang & Pickard, 2008). Almost one in five respondents had an income of less than \$20,000 annually. If there are housing options available, they may not be affordable for these older adults, especially for older Canadian women who accumulate approximately two-thirds of the financial resources than men do by retirement, and a pension income from a spouse can be reduced to half upon the death of a spouse (Denton & Boos, 2007). Although some forms of affordable housing exist in Atlantic Canada, such as public housing that is geared to income, there are often long waiting lists involved because the federal government cut funding to housing programs, beginning in the 1980s, and few new public housing units have been built since the mid 1990s (Snow, 2008; DaSilva et al., 2009). In 2001, the federal government provided funding to the provinces and territories to increase the availability of affordable housing through public-private partnerships. Although this program has resulted in the creation of new affordable housing for seniors, there is no requirement that the homes remain affordable housing beyond 10–15 years, and income eligibility criteria may exclude some low- to moderate-income seniors (DaSilva et al., 2009).

Driving emerged as the only significant health-related factor related to relocation, potentially because it is a complex task that relies on a variety of abilities such as vision and mobility. Although driving is a factor related to health status and changes in health status can serve as a push or pull factor, it is also related to the environment in which older adults live. Our finding that those who do not drive are less likely to consider relocation may

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seem counterintuitive and contrasts to prior research (Tang & Pickard, 2008). However, these older adults may have adapted to driving cessation or may have never driven. In essence, they may have already made accommodations for not driving and are happy living where they are. Because one in five older adults in our sample did not drive, it is worth noting that providing services through either supporting older adults to continue to drive safely or providing alternate transportation options are desirable directions as mobility is an essential component of quality of life for older adults (Bauer, Rottunda, & Adler, 2003; Kostyniuk & Shope, 2003). In addition, social integration and the participation of older adults in society are often considered indicators of healthy aging and healthy communities (Keefe, Andrew, Fancey, & Hall, 2006).

besoins non rencontrés principalement pour les gros ménages

Push factors increasing preferences for relocation included those whose homes did not meet their needs and those who have unmet needs for heavy or spring cleaning; these findings are consistent with those in other studies (Tyvimaa & Kemp, 2011). There is inadequate attention paid to the unmet needs of older adults related to community-based services (Casudo, van Vulpen, & Davis, 2011; Li, 2006). The results of this study provide insight into how the push and pull factors related to the physical nature of the home and how well it matched the needs of the older adult. For example, 32% of our sample had already modified their home to make it more accessible, and 8% said their home did not meet their needs. Although there are Canadian programs that offer financial assistance to help homeowners meet health and safety standards (DaSilva et al., 2009), many older adults do not access these programs. Tang and Pickard (2008) found that approximately one-third of older adults are aware of home repair services, and this was the lowest rating of 12 community-based care and support services. In addition, publicly funded home care programs increasingly provide medical services and fewer home support services (Keefe, 2002), leaving a gap in access to heavy cleaning services for low-income seniors in particular, who cannot afford to pay for private services. Practitioners need to make seniors and their family members aware of services that can help support independent living and prevent unnecessary relocation of seniors (Wagnild, 2001) and identify ways in which seniors can access heavy cleaning services. Additional public resources are needed to fund these services for older adults to prevent unnecessary relocation.

bien informé des services existants

Our results may not be generalizable to older adults in other parts of Canada or older adults in other countries. The participants in this study lived in the four Atlantic Canada provinces, and this region has some distinct characteristics, such as a large senior population, a large rural senior population, a large proportion of older adults who own their own home, and a relatively ethnically homogeneous population. However, our results are important in helping to identify predictors of relocation that can be examined in other locations.

CONCLUSIONS

Through calculating ORs, we determined that being younger, not having one's needs met by the current dwelling, and having a higher income have the largest affect on the desire to relocate. Thus, it is primarily personal characteristics and factors in the immediate environment that are push factors that influence relocation preferences among older adults.

Community-based programs that focus on identify those at most risk of relocation, supporting their preferences to age in place, and helping them through the relocation process are imperative. Helping older adults plan ahead for living arrangements is more beneficial to well-being than reacting to crises involving relocation (Pope & Kang, 2010). Practitioners need to be particularly aware that older adults with combinations of characteristics may be particularly adamant about remaining in their homes, such as low income older adults of advanced age. They may be particularly connected to a home or community and, due to financial reasons, have few housing options. Practitioners need to be particularly cognizant that older adults with cumulative disadvantages over the life course may have fewer financial resources or lack knowledge about services and supports, such as access and eligibility (Denton & Boos, 2007; Tang & Pickard, 2008). Finally, it is clear that more affordable housing options are needed, and as such, policies to provide addition funding for affordable housing options are vital.

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