

## Stats: 13 million US households could need home modifications

By the year 2035, 50 million households—one out of every three—will be headed by older adults, which is likely to increase the demand for home modifications to enable aging in place. About 12.8 million 65+ households include at least one person with a disability. Across the nation, available housing stock rarely includes basic universal design features of a no-step entry, single floor living, extra wide hallways and doorways, lever handles on faucets and doors, and electric controls accessible to a person in a wheelchair.

SOURCE: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, *The State of the Nation's Housing* (June 2017)

## Older people are fast-growing segment of the workforce

In Canada, 38% of people 55 years and older were working in 2016, according to a new release of data from the census. The proportion of women who are 55+ and working was 32% (almost double the number in 1976) and for men, 44%. (Statistics Canada, *The impact of aging on labour market participation rates*, June 14, 2017)

In the United States, 40% of people 55 years and older were working or actively looking for work in 2014. The proportion of people at midlife and older, especially ages 65-74 and 75 years and older, who are working is projected to grow at a faster rate than that of younger age groups. Workers 55 years and older were most often in professional and management occupations, followed by sales and office and service roles.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 2017)

## Leisure-time physical activity may reduce risk of Alzheimer's

A systematic review found 24 studies that examined the relationship between physical activity and new cases of Alzheimer's disease. The studies included a wide range of 176 to 5,698 participants who were followed between one to 34 years. The authors noted that the evidence was moderate or low, but that in 18 studies leisure-time physical activity protected against Alzheimer's disease, although work-related activity did not. There was not enough information to determine how much physical activity is protective.

SOURCE: *Journals of Gerontology, Biological and Medical Sciences*, 72(6):733-739 (June 2017)

## Digitally connected, with a little help

Over the past five years, the use of smartphones by people 65 years and older in the US has nearly quadrupled so that about 42% of an estimated 46 million people own smartphones. Two-thirds (67%) access the Internet, with about half having broadband. People ages 65-69 are about twice as likely as those ages 80 and older to say they ever go online (82% vs. 44%) or own a smartphone (59% vs. 17%). The younger older adults who are more highly educated and affluent are driving technology adoption.

Among people 65 years and older, 48% agree that “when I get a new electronic device, I usually need someone else to set it up or show me how to use it.” While 26% are very confident and 39% somewhat confident that when using computers, smartphones or other electronic devices to do the things they need to do online, that leaves the remaining one-third (35%) reporting little or no confidence they can use the devices. The information is based on telephone interviews with 3,015 adults.

SOURCE: Pew Research (May 17, 2017)

## In longterm care, environmental features promote physical activity

In general, people become more physically inactive as they age. However, individuals in longterm care (assisted living or nursing) may spend more time being inactive than those in the larger community. Are there other factors besides their health condition that influences levels of inactivity? The Physical and Architectural Features Checklist was used to answer that question.

REVIEW: After a literature review, 12 studies were found relating physical activity among people 65 years and older in assisted living or nursing care to influences of the physical environment and of caregiving staff.

FINDINGS: Environment factors that encouraged activity were person-environment fit, such as the height of shelves, wider corridors with handrails and spaces to sit, larger elevator spaces and easily accessible activity rooms and restrooms. Artwork, windows and plants would give residents something to see as they walked. Outdoor areas, such as a garden, were positively related to physical activity.

Levels of staffing were also a factor. Residents spent more hours/day in bed in longterm care residences with low staffing levels (including on weekends compared to weekdays) than they did in facilities with higher levels of staffing. The amount of time caregivers had available to assist residents was also a factor.

SOURCE: BMC Geriatrics, open access (April 2017)



## Rewrite descriptions to make vegetables exciting

Vegetables and fruits are mainstays of dietary recommendations (MyPlate for Older Adults, Tufts University) as well as a prominent part of the Mediterranean eating pattern (Mediterranean Diet Pyramid, Oldways) because plant-based eating has been linked to positive health outcomes. A low intake of vegetables and fruit is one of the common risk factors for chronic disease (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). How many vegetables do your clients or residents eat every day? Maybe changing the wording on menus will increase that quantity.

**STUDY:** Servings of vegetables offered in a university cafeteria were prepared the same way, but the descriptions were written to focus on four different qualities. For example, green beans were described in terms that were basic (green beans); healthy-restrictive (light 'n' low-carb green beans and shallots); healthy-positive (healthy energy-boosting green beans and shallots); or indulgent (sweet sizzlin' green beans and crispy shallots). The amount of vegetables diners chose in each category was monitored.

**FINDINGS:** Indulgent labeling of vegetables resulted in 25% more people selecting the vegetable compared with basic labeling, 41% more people than the healthy-restrictive labeling and 35% more people than the healthy-positive labeling.

**COMMENT:** "Healthy foods can be indulgent and tasty," said Bradley Turnwald, MS, lead author and graduate psychology student at Stanford University. "They just aren't typically described that way. If people don't think healthy foods taste good, how can we expect them to make healthy choices?"

**SOURCE:** JAMA Internal Medicine, online (June 12, 2017)

--reported by Patricia Ryan

---

### International Council on Active Aging

CEO & Publisher, Colin Milner  
Chief Operating Officer, Julie Milner  
Vice President of Education, Patricia Ryan, MS

Director of Market Development, Patsy LeBlanc  
Editor-In-Chief, Journal on Active Aging, Jenifer Milner  
Communications Director, Marilyn Larkin

---

Copyright 2017 ICAA Services, dba International Council on Active Aging, Vancouver, BC. 866-335-9777 or 604-734-4466.  
Disclaimer. ICAA Research Review is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not medical advice.