

A sense of home important is in residential care for the elderly

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Many elderly people in residential care feel insecure during relocation or renovation work - but there are ways of handling the situation. Those who manage to create a sense of home where they live are in a better position to cope with the stresses that go with change, reveals a thesis from the Sahlgrenska Academy.

Going into residential care means that elderly people have to adapt to an environment that differs in many ways to what they are used to.

"A sense of belonging where you live is important for your sense of self and identity, which, in turn, strengthens a person's ability to deal with the changes that impaired function and institutionalisation can bring," says Hanna Falk, nurse and doctoral student at the Institute of Health and Care Sciences.

The thesis also examines how the elderly define the concept of "a sense of home", and found that it covers far more than just a pleasant physical environment.

"There are other factors that come into play, for example that the elderly furnish their rooms exactly as they did when they lived at home, or that they make new friends who contribute to a greater sense of home," says Falk, stating that actual attachment to the institution is vital if it is to be viewed as home.

She also found that renovations designed to help create a more home-

like and supportive environment in residential care have little impact on how the elderly perceive the [atmosphere](#). Furthermore, [relocation](#) and renovations - and the problems that they bring - can negatively affect the quality of life and wellbeing of the elderly.

"The vulnerability of the elderly in connection with changes to their environment must be given greater consideration in the context of extensive renovations than is currently the case in the care of the elderly," says Falk. "There's still plenty of work to be done, for example the development of action plans to handle relocations and renovations so that the [elderly](#) and the staff are in the best possible position to cope with the situation."

The thesis has been successfully defended.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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