

P.E.W. VAN DEN BERG, A.D.A.M. KEMPERMAN, C.G.J. UYTDEWILLEGEN, M. WEIJS-PERRÉE. **Loneliness, residential environment, mobility, and ICT-use among elderly.** *Gerontechnology* 2016;15(suppl):147s. doi:10.4017/gt.2016.15.s.639.00 **Purpose** A major challenge with respect to an aging society is to maintain quality of life of the elderly and to prevent them from feelings of loneliness. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that affect feelings of loneliness. Thus far, the effect of mobility and the living environment on loneliness have been largely overlooked<sup>1</sup>. In this study we take into account the possible effects of personal and household characteristics, characteristics of the residential environment, mobility and use of communication technology. **Method** For this study survey data were collected in 2015 in the Netherlands. The sample consists of 184 elderly aged 65 and over (44% males, 56% females). Loneliness was measured using a 6-item scale<sup>2</sup>. The item scores were summed to a total score, with a mean of 14.4 and a standard deviation of 4.5. We used a stepwise linear regression model to analyse the factors that affect loneliness. **Results & Discussion** The results suggest that elderly with a low income and recently widowed elderly are likely to be lonelier. People with a relatively large social network are less lonely. With respect to the residential environment we find that elderly living in an apartment are less lonely. This might be explained by the fact that in an apartment people have fellow residents they can socialize with. On the other hand, people in rural areas also tend to be less lonely. This can be explained by the fact that in rural areas stronger local networks still exist<sup>3</sup>. Social cohesion and residential satisfaction are also related to feeling less lonely. With respect to mobility, the GARS score (Groningen Activity Restriction Scale)<sup>4</sup> appears to have the strongest effect on loneliness. People who are more restricted in their daily activities tend to be lonelier. Finally, the results indicate that elderly who use a tablet at least once a month are less lonely. These results are relevant for health care and urban policy makers who aim to improve quality of life of the aging population.

### References

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*Table 1. Results of linear regression model on loneliness; B=regression coefficient; GARS= Groningen Activity Restriction Scale<sup>4</sup>*

Parameter	B	p
Constant	22.43	0.00
<b>Personal and household characteristics</b>		
Large social network (≥6)	-2.35	0.00
Low income (<€1200 / month)	1.67	0.01
Partner passed away last year	3.26	0.00
<b>Residential environment</b>		
Lives in apartment	-1.87	0.00
Lives in rural area	-1.55	0.01
Low residential satisfaction	1.69	0.02
Perceived social cohesion	-0.35	0.00
<b>Mobility</b>		
GARS score	0.07	0.00
<b>ICT-use</b>		
Uses tablet	-1.42	0.02
Sample size	184	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.456	