

POSTER

Transportation and Personal Mobility

E. FU, B. ROSKOS, S. SICKLER. Older adults who use GPS: What makes wayfinding easier for them? Gerontechnology 2018;17(Suppl):191s; <https://doi.org/10.4017/gt.2018.17.s.186.00> **Purpose** Older adults living in retirement communities (*Figure 1*) often need to drive to unfamiliar places near the community. In recent years, many older adults are introduced to electronic wayfinding aids by other people such as their children and grandchildren. Yet the use of new technology has been shown challenging for older users.¹ The current study explored GPS usage in older adults living in a retirement community and investigated what factors older adults feel that make their wayfinding tasks easy or difficult. **Methods** Twenty residents living in a retirement community were interviewed. All participants were relatively new residents in the community (moved in within five years prior to the study). **Results & Discussion** Among them, six mentioned using a GPS during the 30-minute interview. One participant mentioned GPS as a helpful tool for one of her friends thus it's also helpful for her wayfinding because that friend often drives her around. For all our participants, road signs, human services, familiar environment, light traffic, and public transportation were mentioned as helpful for their wayfinding. For outdoor environments, intersections were mentioned as the most helpful environmental features for wayfinding. For indoor environments, signs were mentioned as the most helpful environmental features for wayfinding. Participants who did mention GPS said that wayfinding was easier for them with a GPS compared to without a GPS. Moreover, compared to participants who did not mention GPS, participants who mentioned GPS were more likely to mention having a map as a factor that makes wayfinding easier for them. Finally, participants who mentioned GPS were more likely to get to unfamiliar places by themselves and were more likely to mention that they go to the doctor's office as destinations for traveling. This study addresses the importance of independent movement and the use of traditional wayfinding tool, such as a map, as precursors of adopting electronic wayfinding aids in older adults.

References

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Address: College of Psychology and Sociology, ShenZhen University, China;

E: fuen322@gmail.com



Figure 1. Layout of the retirement community where this study was conducted