

OPP: HEALTHY INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS & HEALING ARCHITECTURE

Senior involvement to validate criteria and metrics for assessing the quality of urban space

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Purpose The research is a continuation of studies carried out in 2020 at the Faculty of Architecture at Poznan University of Technology in the field of creating architectural spaces that support the aging process. Assessing the urban quality of life (QoL) and the concept of age-friendly cities is not a new idea, but it requires further development to address new challenges and sociodemographic conditions (Ptak-Wojciechowska et al., 2022). Many publications devoted to the QoL assessment and the role of the built environment have been already published. However, the aspect of the quality of spatial structure concerning the health and well-being of ageing societies has been underestimated. In gerontological studies, there are insightful publications on the influence of the Person-Environment Fit on the residential satisfaction of older people (Kahana et al., 2003; Lawton, 1982). Yet, existing assessment frameworks are insufficient to comprehensively measure the spatial structure of a city on a neighbourhood level and its impact on the QoL of older individuals (Gawlak et al., 2021; Ptak-Wojciechowska et al., 2021). Moreover, to the best of the authors' knowledge, there is no study where architects and seniors are involved as groups of decision-makers in the process of formulating criteria and metrics for a city's spatial structure assessment. The following research questions were formulated: In what way the proposed criteria, sub-criteria and metrics could be validated? What does the validated questionnaire for seniors, measuring their perception of a city's spatial structure, look like? Which aspects of the spatial structure of the city are significant for seniors? **Method** This study aims to validate the criteria, sub-criteria and metrics for assessing the quality of architectural and urban space, formulated as part of the research for the doctoral thesis (Ptak-Wojciechowska, 2023). The survey is carried out in the form of a workshop among 25 seniors, assisted by the students from the Faculty of Architecture. The first phase of our method includes proposing metrics (for assessing the quality of architectural and urban spaces) by describing them on sticky notes and attaching them to a 100x70 cm board within a specific evaluation sub-criterion. The second phase is the selection of the 3 most important criteria and sub-criteria for the final prioritisation by elderly participants. The last phase is the improvement of the evaluation framework and questionnaire for measuring seniors' perceptions by researchers, based on added/ reformulated sub-criteria and metrics. **Results and Discussion** Among the metrics formulated by seniors, some relate to universal design principles (e.g. wheelchair accessible housing, absence of obstacles, non-slip floors) and assistive technologies (air conditioning, temperature control, automatic lighting, voice signals at pedestrian crossings). The new framework is more precise and pragmatic from the point of view of its use in creating a QoL in the city and shall be used directly by seniors to assess the friendliness of their neighbourhood. Additionally, a method corresponds to the scale of the city and its neighbourhoods. The next phase will be to validate the evaluation framework with experts, architects and urban planners, extend the introductory section of the questionnaire to include information on personal preferences and conduct a questionnaire survey among older people.

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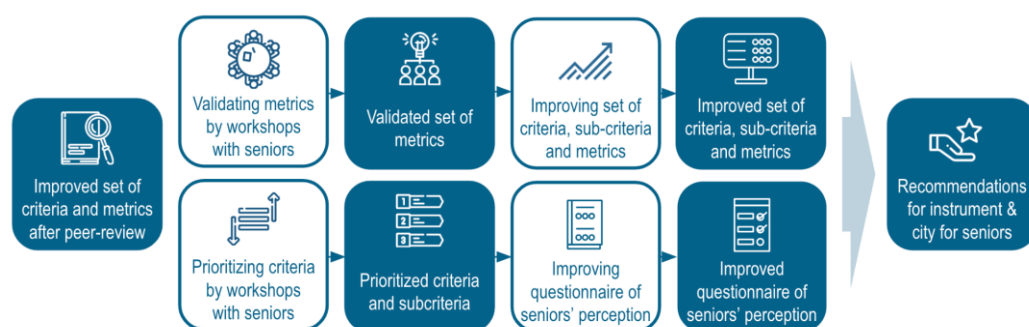


Figure 1. Overview of the proposal