

SIZE

A Critical Review of the Quantitative Studies

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General

Mobility of the elderly is an important topic:

- Increasing numbers of elderly
- Increasing life expectancy of the elderly
- Increasing health of the elderly in comparison to elderly of the same age in the past

Increasing mobility of elderly of increasing age is to be expected

Therefore it is important to know more about their mobility needs



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Three parts of the quantitative study

- Survey with the seniors citizens
- Survey with the experts
- Comparison of attitudes of senior citizens and experts

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Sample of senior citizens

In the present study there are three age categories

- 65 – 74 years
- 75 – 84 years
- 85 and older

Useful differentiation although aging does not happen according to the numerical age only

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Sample of senior citizens

- ❑ Large number of surveyed persons:
more than 3,300
- ❑ Good distribution of sample by age, sex, place
of residence and income

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Sample of experts

In the present study there are three types of experts

- ❑ 1/3 Political experts
- ❑ 1/3 Technical experts
- ❑ 1/3 Advisory (scientific) experts

In Sweden a very large proportion of advisory (scientific) experts,
few political experts

In Spain large proportion technical experts,
few advisory (scientific) experts

Are all „experts“ equally competent?

Does it make sense to put them together into one single group?

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Methods – survey senior citizens

- Pre-Test of the questionnaire

- Based on theoretical work
 - objective mobility conditions
 - subjective mobility conditions

Both are important and often neglected steps in questionnaire research

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Methods – both surveys

- Many involved countries
 - Austria
 - Czech Republic
 - Germany
 - Ireland
 - Italy
 - Poland
 - Spain
 - Sweden

Very good to check for differences
(for example North vs. South, East vs. West)

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Results – Both surveys

Five dimensions compared

- Fears regarding potential hazards of outdoor mobility
- Mobility and the quality of life
- Barriers and obstacles to mobility
- Solutions for better mobility of the elderly
- Political topics

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Results - Fears

- Most important fears of the senior citizens
 - Falls and injuries
 - Becoming a victim (of crime)
 - Being threatened by vehicles on footpath
- Experts in general assume much higher levels of fear than the senior citizens themselves

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Experts in general assume much higher levels of fear than the senior citizens themselves

What is the reason?

- Do the experts make judgements on the very old?
Example: Largest difference between elderly and experts on fear-items related to confusion (dementia?)
- The experts' own (negative) expectations of age?
- Differences in the quality of judgements of the different types of experts?

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Results - Mobility and Quality of Life

- Most important mobility and quality of life variable of the senior citizens:

- Speed limits are not respected enough

This is a very important variable for the elderly (as pedestrians and as drivers) because

- their cognitive processing is getting slower
- their physical frailty increases

- The relevance of this topic is shared by the experts and the senior citizens 😊

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Results – Barriers to Mobility

- The most important barriers to mobility for the senior citizens:
 - Inconsiderate car drivers
 - Vehicles on footpath

- Attitudes of the experts more negative (more barriers).
BUT: 2 barriers with relatively little difference between senior citizens and experts (underestimated by experts?)
 - Lack of punctuality of public transport
 - Loose animals (usually dogs)

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Results – Solutions for Mobility

- Most important solution of mobility problems for the senior citizens:
 - Enforce speed restrictions

- Experts also see speed enforcement as very relevant 😊

- One solution that experts see as a lot less urgent than the elderly
 - Senior citizen representative in the administration (Empowerment)

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Results - Political estimations/moods

- Most important political dimension for the senior citizens:
 - Welfare/state funding would affect older people the most

 - Most important political dimension for the experts:
 - Priority for buses/trams in towns/cities
- ☹

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Survey of Elderly and Experts

- Very useful comparison for practical purposes

- I disagree with the statement that „Seniors and experts both have a bias in their standpoints“.
 - The elderly are the experts for their own problems in mobility.
 - They are not necessarily the experts for the best solutions.

- The experts should prove the validity of their problem analysis by analyzing the opinions of the senior citizens.

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Where are we now after this study?

In medical research the following steps are frequently followed:

- Clinical observations
- Available Data
- Case-Control Study
- Cohort Studies
- Randomized Trials

From this perspective we are currently at stage 2.
We now know better what the main problems are.

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Where are we now after this study?

Now we have to find solutions for these existing problems and evaluate them for their

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Equity
- Legality
- Political acceptability
- Administrative feasibility

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Methods - critique

- Some questions not very clear: Quality of Life, question 2.
„Do you think that in YOUR COUNTRY older adults can easily drive their own car?“
Are we talking about money or about the ability to drive?
Very large differences between countries (especially Poland and Spain have very high percentages for „sometimes“ and „never“).

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Methods - critique

- Sometimes causal clues were made although only associations have been shown
(„income has an influence on ... autonomy and satisfaction“, p. 59, Deliverable 12)
- Calculating means with ordinal data is frequently done but it is not correct
- Confounding variables (age, sex) not always controlled for (example: comparison of drivers and non-drivers regarding fears after having found that being a driver or non-driver is related to sex and age, Table 4.3.3-9, Deliverable 12)

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