

An overview of innovative living arrangements within long-term care and their characteristics: a scoping review

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Key highlights:

- Various innovative living arrangements are being developed, but a clear overview and insight in their defining characteristics is missing.
- Results show that innovative living arrangements still mainly focus on changes in the physical surroundings. It is important for future research to gain more insight in the social and organizational environment of these arrangements.
- More knowledge concerning the physical, social and organizational environment of innovative living arrangements will provide clarity and can help care providers, housing organizations and architects within long-term care.

The environment is a critical determinant of the extent to which person-centered care is provided in long-term care. It supports everyday functioning in older persons, especially when disease progresses and people become

more dependent on others. Within long-term care, a culture change is taking place. The focus has shifted from a medical-oriented approach focusing on disabilities to a more psychosocial approach. In the current decade of Healthy Ageing, as established by the World Health Organization [1], it is emphasized that long-term care should focus on supporting the functional abilities of older people who experience a significant loss in capacity. More and more innovative living arrangements are being developed to accommodate these new approaches, often including psychosocial care models that aim to alter the physical, social, and organizational environment positively. Within the literature, various innovative living arrangements have been described [2,3]. However, a clear overview and insight into their defining characteristics is lacking. Therefore, we have conducted a scoping review to provide an overview of the literature concerning innovative living arrangements. Furthermore, we aimed to describe these innovative living arrangements' defining characteristics and overarching themes [4].

Characteristics of Innovative Living Arrangements

A total of 56 articles were included in our review. We found seven distinctive, innovative living arrangements and an 'other' category: 1) Small-scale living (Netherlands/Belgium), 2) the Green house model (US), 3) Shared housing arrangements (Germany), 4) Green care farms (Netherlands), 5) Dementia villages (Netherlands, France, Denmark), 6) group homes (Japan), and 7) intergenerational living (Netherlands). Despite the diversity of these living arrangements, several overarching themes were found.

The first one is *promoting autonomy*. Almost all arrangements mention the importance of fostering autonomy. In most arrangements, autonomy entails offering daily choice and a normalized daily life. However, despite the apparent importance of autonomy, a clear definition of what autonomy entails is lacking. Furthermore, a clear description of how autonomy is fostered is often missing. The second one is *creating a small-scale and homelike environment*. This is evident in a large subset of the arrangements and is usually achieved by creating an archetype house and making the interior recognizable and personal. Third, *the integration of work tasks*. Some of the arrangements focus on integrated tasks for staff members, meaning they do not only perform care tasks but also, for example, domestic or social tasks. The fourth theme is the *involvement of the community*. This is especially important in intergenerational living and the dementia village, as they attempt to create a sense of community by either involving the outside neighborhood or creating an inside neighborhood. The fifth theme is

a *focus on nature*, where life revolves around nature. This is especially clear in concepts such as green care farms and green houses, where the daily lives of residents focus on agricultural activities. The last theme is the *involvement of family members*, where arrangements attempt to give family members an important role in the daily lives of residents.

This review shows that even though there is overlap in terminology, innovative living arrangements can still differ in operationalization. It is important to gain more insight into the underlying mechanisms defining innovative living arrangements. Furthermore, the focus of the innovative living arrangements is still mainly on the physical surroundings. Descriptions of the social and organizational environment are often lacking or remain vague. Our review shows that more insight is needed in how the innovative living arrangements operate in terms of the physical environment and the social and organizational one.

Future directions

Gaining more knowledge concerning the physical and especially social and organizational environment of innovative living arrangements will help care providers, housing associations and architects in long-term care. More insight will support them when developing alternative living arrangements. This will lead to increased attention to the social and organizational environment, such as the role of staff members and management in creating a new way of working, thus promoting culture change.

For further reading:

1. Beard J., Officer A., Araujo de Carvalho et al. The World report on ageing and health: a policy framework for healthy ageing. *Lancet*. 2016. 21;387(10033):2145-2154
2. Verbeek H., Van Rossum E Zwakhalen SMG, Kempen GIJM, Hamers JPH. Small, homelike care environments for older people with dementia: a literature review. *Int Psychogeriatr* 2009. 21: 252-264.
3. Ausserhofer D, Deschodt M, De Geest S et al. "There's No Place Like Home": A Scoping Review on the Impact of Homelike Residential Care Models on Resident-, Family-, and Staff-Related Outcomes. *J Am Med Dir Assoc*. 2016. 1;17(8):685-93.
4. Brouwers M, Broekharst DSE, de Boer B, Groen WG, Verbeek H. An overview of innovative living arrangements within long-term care and their characteristics: a scoping review. *BMC Geriatr*. 2023;23(1):442.



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