

BUILDING BRIDGES, MINDING THE GAPS: INVOLVING THE PERSPECTIVES OF OLDER PEOPLE IN CREATING RESILIENT HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE TO DISASTERS

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Abstract

Introduction: Natural disasters have increased over the last decades. As the world population is also ageing, older people have become more exposed to disasters, with the United Nations highlighting the critical role of healthcare infrastructure in disaster contexts. Traditionally, research on disaster resilience has focused mainly on disasters' negative effects on older people as a vulnerable group, and there is scarce research in engineering that incorporates older people's needs and experiences as a group that is also capable and resilient. This project responds to the lack of research that incorporates the assessment of resilience in healthcare facilities that incorporates the perspectives of older people as its final users.

Objective: This paper presents a methodological approach to integrating the physical assessment of resilience in healthcare facilities with the perspectives of older people. It corresponds to a study still being conducted in the central zone of Chile. This region is regularly exposed to earthquakes and concentrates the largest number of complex healthcare facilities in the nation, targeting around 40% of its older population.

Methods: A collaboration between two PhD research projects is assessing healthcare facilities' experience of large earthquakes and the relationships between facilities in disaster contexts and the perspectives of older people. This is a mixed-methods study, that will combine a qualitative approach (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) with seismic engineering resilience modelling.

Results: Preliminary results helped identify earthquakes' potential effects on functionality from the perspectives of older people and the relationships between healthcare facilities. This study can contribute to healthcare facilities' earthquake resilience by offering a broader perspective on the links between older people's disaster experiences and healthcare facilities.

Keywords: earthquake resilience, healthcare facilities, older people.