Engaging Older Adults to Be More Active Where They Live: Audit Tool Development

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Inter-rater reliability among the trained researchers was examined. Researchers across the seven HAN sites examined differences in neighborhood segments audited to determine the distribution of study variables, such as presence of sidewalks and crosswalks. Qualitative interviews of older adults about environmental influences on walking behavior revealed that having destinations to walk to appeared to be an important motivator for walking, although many people reported both walking to reach destinations as well as taking walks just for pleasure. Destinations such as grocery stores, banks, pharmacies, restaurants, and beauty parlors were mentioned, as were churches, libraries, parks, and the homes of family, friends, and neighbors. Personal safety was another frequently mentioned topic, with many residents feeling safe walking during the daytime but not at night. Interviewees indicated that their choice of walking routes was influenced by the length of the route, sidewalk quality, people along the route, amount of traffic, crosswalks and signals for crossing the street, perceived safety from crime, scenery, aesthetics, and presence of interesting things to look at. Future directions include using the environmental audit instrument in a study to see which environmental
audit items are correlated with actual walking behavior in an older population.

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