Introduction: A regional community space in Japan, Chiiki-Katsudokan, was founded to facilitate the social interactions of older adults through activities. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic occasionally forced this space to close or limited the volume of its participants. In this research, the operation of the space was reviewed by monitoring the changes in the social interactions of the attendees, and by investigating the anticipated function from the attendees’ needs. Method: A semi-structured interview targeting the attendees of Chiiki-Katsudokan was conducted in December 2021 (N=19, main age:80s). The level of social interaction before and during the pandemic and the newly anticipated function of the space were examined.

Results: First, deep and light interactions were observed. Those with deep interactions initially had wide social connections and used Chiiki-Katsudokan to interact with friends. Meanwhile, those with light interactions only talked to other attendees while attending the space. During the quarantine, those with deep interactions stayed connected with others and met privately, while those with light interactions faced a higher risk of social isolation. Second, the most popular newly anticipated functions of the space were “Place to gather with friends (n=14)” and “Interaction with younger generation (n=14).” “Opportunity to learn about the new pandemic-lifestyle (n=11)” was also rated high, while need for “online events” was rated the lowest (n=7).

Conclusion: The pandemic re-emphasized older adults’ need for direct interaction. Low interest in technology-based countermeasures suggested that community spaces should expand their operation method while considering offline methods (e.g., pen-pal system) that could enhance social interaction.

TYPES OF ATTENDEES IN COMMUNITY SPACE IN JAPAN: TOWARD DESIGNING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

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Introduction: Designing community space for social participation of older adults is essential for healthy aging. The behavioral characteristics of the attendees have had much to offer as they relate to social settings designed in the space. This study aims to elucidate the basic typology of the attendees considering their motivation for attendance and state of social connection.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews targeting attendees of Chiiki-Katsudokan, a space designed for social participation in a larger aging estate in Japan, were conducted in December 2021 (N=16, 16% male). Attendees were asked about their reasons for attending events at Chiiki-Katsudokan, interaction levels with other attendees, and levels of social participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results: Based on the interviews, attendees were classified into three types: Seeker, Hobbyist, and Socializer. First, Seekers (n=3) used Chiiki-Katsudokan as the primary means of preventing social isolation. Amongst the three types, the social interaction level of Seekers was the lightest, and the opportunity decreased when Chiiki-Katsudokan closed during the quarantine. Second, the main motivation for Hobbyists (n=5) was the event contents which matched their interests. Hobbyists were also likely to engage in hobby networks, which continued privately during the pandemic. Finally, Socializers (n=8) attended Chiiki-Katsudokan to communicate with friends. Many were initially socially active and engaged in social interaction outside Chiiki-Katsudokan, e.g., teatime with friends, during the quarantine.

Conclusion: This study suggested that designing community space for social participation requires defining the varying levels of engagement and expecting relationships outside the space based on the behavioral characteristics of the attendees.

MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING AMONG DISABLED OLDER ADULTS: THE MODERATED ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT

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Engaging in meaningful activities has been seen as an important way to sustain the well-being of older adults with disabilities and to achieve person-centered care. Yet, it is still unclear whether and to what extent meaningful activity engagement promotes well-being for community-dwelling older adults with disabilities, and how the environmental factors could affect these relationships. This study aims to investigate the relationship between meaningful activity engagement and psychological well-being, and to explore the moderated role of environmental factors (physical, attitudinal, service/support, policy). Survey data conducted in Taiwan between April and July of 2018 were analyzed by using multiple regression (N=1,244). Three types of meaningful activities (instrumental, social, and leisure) were identified based on a self-rated activity meaningfulness measure. Findings showed that higher levels of engagement in three types of meaningful activities were associated with better quality of life (QOL), but only engaging in meaningful leisure was associated with less depressive symptoms while adjusting functional status. Perceived better policy-related environment (e.g., long-term care services) could reinforce the positive effects of three types of meaningful activity engagement on QOL and depressive symptoms. Findings also indicated perceived attitudinal environment moderated the association between meaningful leisure activity engagement and QOL. These results established the influences of meaningful activity engagement on the well-being of community-dwelling older adults with disabilities and highlight the importance of age-friendly environment in supporting meaningful activity engagement and older adults’ well-being.

SESSION 6250 (POSTER)

ATTITUDES ABOUT AGING (POSTERS)

OLDER ADULTS’ INDIVIDUAL TRAJECTORIES IN SOCIAL STATUS AND AGING ANXIETY

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A high social standing in comparison to others is associated with positive psychological and health outcomes. Highest social standing is assigned to the group of middle-aged adults, hence, on average, older adults face a loss in status relative