

REACHING OLDER ADULTS IN NIPISSING AND PARRY SOUND: BUILDING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR NORTHERN COMMUNITIES



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BACKGROUND

This research addresses the critical issue of service access for older adults in the Nipissing and Parry Sound districts, where a significant barrier is the lack of information about available services. The importance of this study lies in its potential to bridge this gap, ensuring that older adults are aware of and can access essential health and community services. Research highlights the challenges faced by older adults, especially in rural areas, in seeking information and connecting with services(Wang et al.,2019; Keenan et al., 2023). The availability of these services is crucial for improving seniors' health outcomes, preventing social isolation, and promoting overall well-being(Leroux et al., 2018). Furthermore, with the shift in behaviors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding how older adults prefer to receive information and how technology impacts their access to services is vital for developing effective outreach strategies(Keenan et al., 2023).

AIM – OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to develop and implement a strategic approach to enhance information dissemination and accessibility of services for older adults in the Nipissing and Parry Sound districts. This initiative aims to ensure that seniors in these regions are informed about the available health and other community services, bridging the gap between service providers and the older adult population, especially those unattached to primary or social care services.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the specific needs and challenges of older adults in Northern Ontario?
- 2) What strategies have been effective in providing information to older adults about available services?
- 3) What methods do older adults
- 4) Are there strategies from other regions(national and International) that could address the unique needs of older adults in Nipissing and Parry Sound?



METHODOLOGY

This research employs a rapid systematic literature review that was conducted using Google Scholar to identify relevant studies on reaching older adults, specifically in Northern Ontario. The search was guided by specific Keywords and Boolean operators (“ AND”), ensuring the selection of literature published between 2010 to 2024.

Key words included:

- * Rural
- *Northern
- * Older adults/ Seniors
- * Information seeking
- * Community services
- * Health information
- * Sharing of Information
- * Service marketing



The literature review for Research Question #1 identified seven key dimensions of need by analyzing recurring themes in selected articles on challenges faced by older adults in accessing health and community services.

For Research Question #2, relevant studies will be examined to explore effective outreach and communication strategies for disseminating information to the underserved older population.

For Research Question #3, the review will analyze trends in seniors' information-seeking behaviors, considering digital literacy, accessibility, and trust in different communication channels.

For Research Question #4, expert opinion will be incorporated to assess how successful strategies from other regions can be adapted to the Northern Ontario context.



EXPECTED RESULTS

The findings are expected to provide insightful recommendations for service providers, facilitating improved information delivery and service access to older adults.

The results for Research Question #1 is to categorize the findings into seven critical areas. Each category will offer actionable insights to address these challenges effectively.

The SEVEN CATEGORIES are:

- 1) HEALTHCARE ACCESS: addressing language, cultural, and literacy barriers, with a focus on improving health literacy and culturally competent care.
- 2) NUTRITIONAL NEEDS: solutions for food insecurity, including financial aid and access to nutritious food.
- 3) DAILY MEDICATION MANAGEMENT: programs to support chronic disease management and in-home healthcare.
- 4) Safe Living Environment: Enhancing aging-in-place with age-friendly features, technology, and caregiver support.
- 5) TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY: Improving transportation options for seniors to access services.
- 6) SOCIAL ISOLATION AND ENGAGEMENT: reducing isolation through social participation and accessible services.
- 7) TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LITERACY: increasing digital literacy and providing user-friendly online platforms for services.

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