Getting Outdoors
Developing Inclusive Access to the Local Environment

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I'DGO: the consortium vision

Consortium established 2003

- How do outdoor environments affect older people's quality of life?
- What aspects of design help or hinder older people in using the outdoors?
- Older people are co-researchers; a range of techniques place them at the heart of our research

I'DGO TOO Researchers

Edinburgh College of Art with Heriot-Watt and Edinburgh Universities

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SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre and Centre for Rehabilitation and Human Performance Research, University of Salford

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I'DGO TOO Partners

Age Concern England
CABE Space
Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR)
Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG)
Dept for Transport
EDAW
EDI Group
Elwood Landscape Design
English Courtyard Developments
English Heritage
Greenspace Scotland
Guide Dogs for the Blind
Health and Safety Executive/Lab
Help the Aged
Homes and Communities Agency
Ian Wall
Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers
Jacobs Babtie
JMU Access Partnership Living Streets
John Gregory
Living Streets
Marshalls
Mayer Brown
NHS Health Scotland
Paths for People
Peabody Trust
Peter Brett Associates
Phil Jones Associates
PRP Architects
Royal Institute of British Architects
Scottish Government
Steve Ongeri
Sustrans
Swindon Borough Council
The Orders of St John Care Trust
TRANSform Scotland

Triangulation of methods

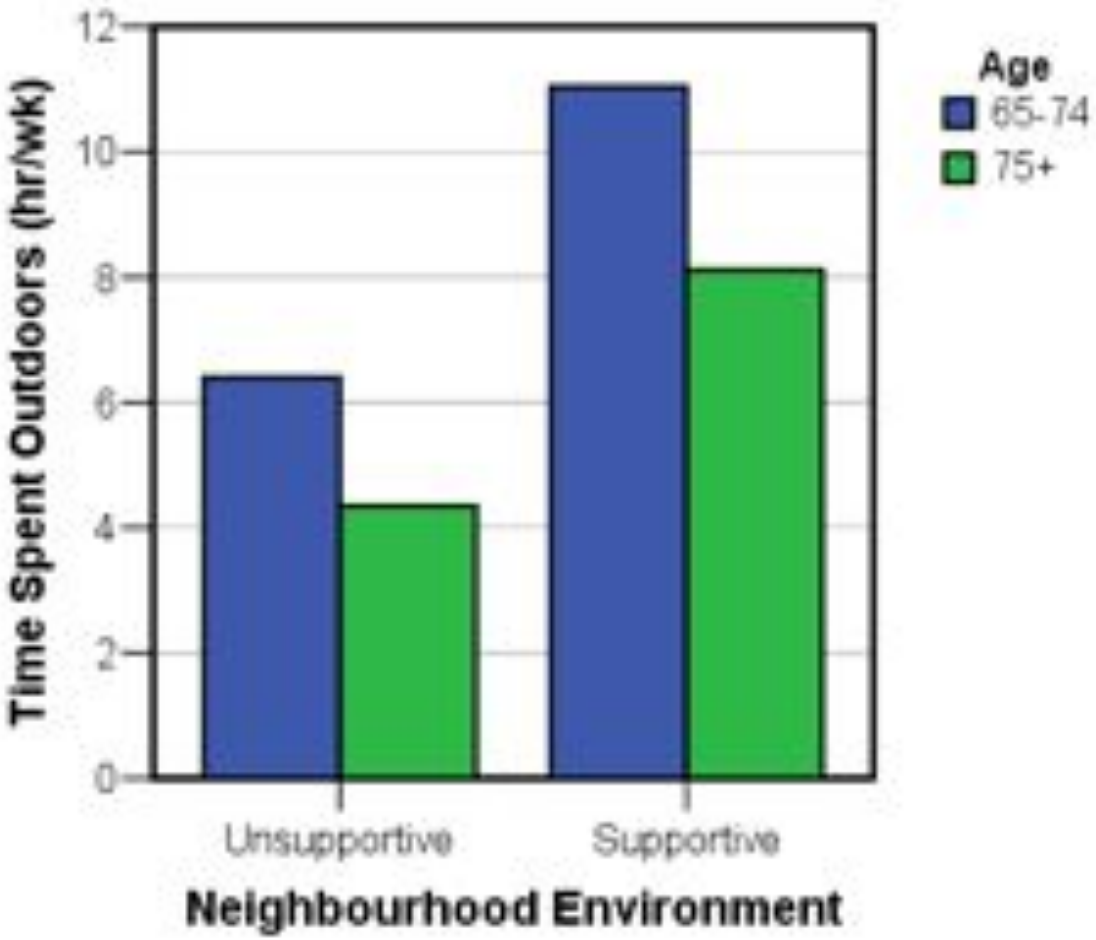
- Focus groups, semi-structured interviews and workshops with older people
- Workshops and questionnaire surveys of designers, planners and managers
- Questionnaire surveys with older people as participants
- On-site analysis of urban form and detailed design
- behaviour-setting observations and accompanied visits with older site users

Why does the outdoor environment matter?

Healthy activity, wellbeing and quality of life

In our study, older people living in an environment that makes it easy and enjoyable to go outdoors were more likely to be physically active, healthier and more satisfied with life.

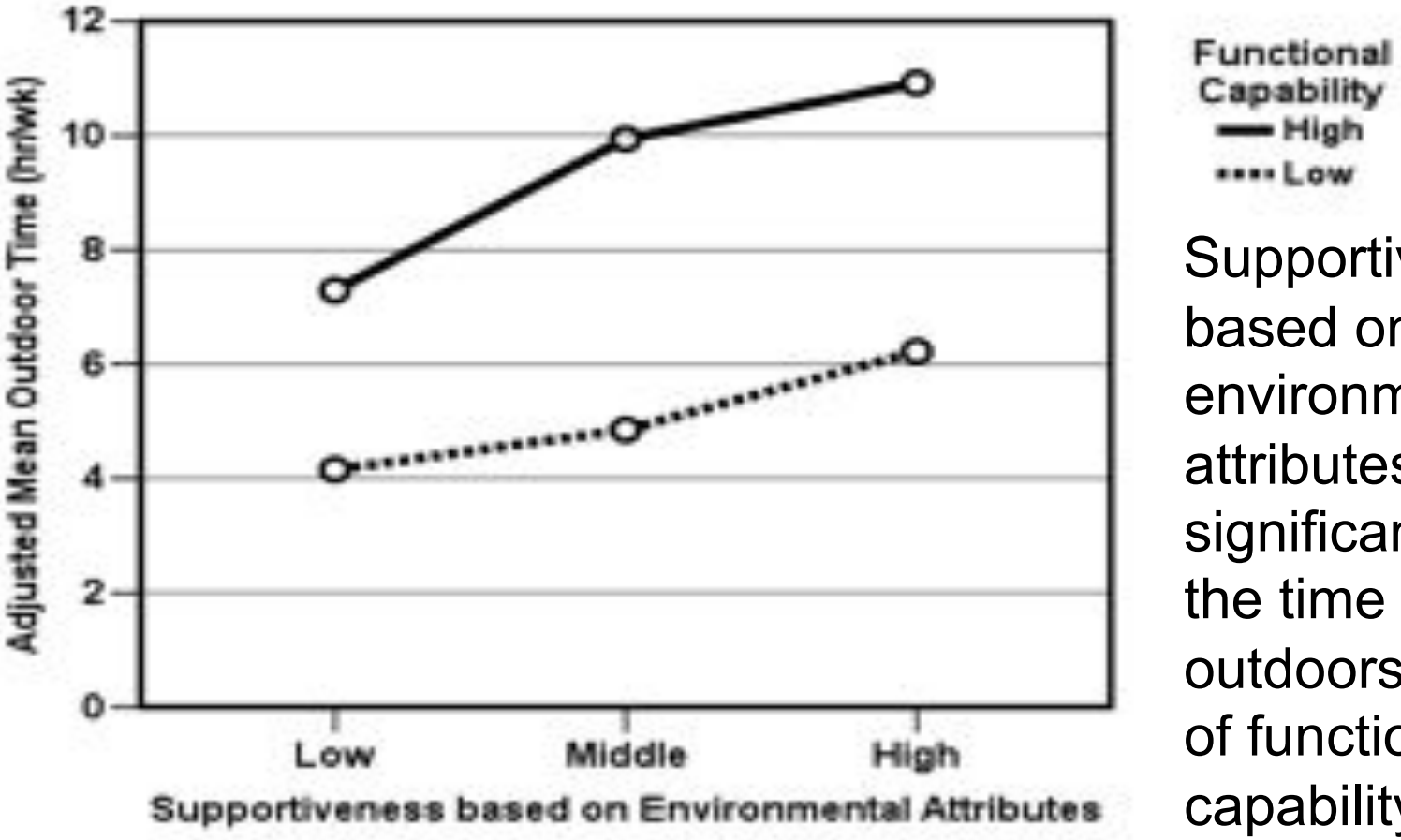
Supportive Neighbourhood Environments & Time Spent Outdoors



People living in a supportive environment tend to spend a longer time outdoors

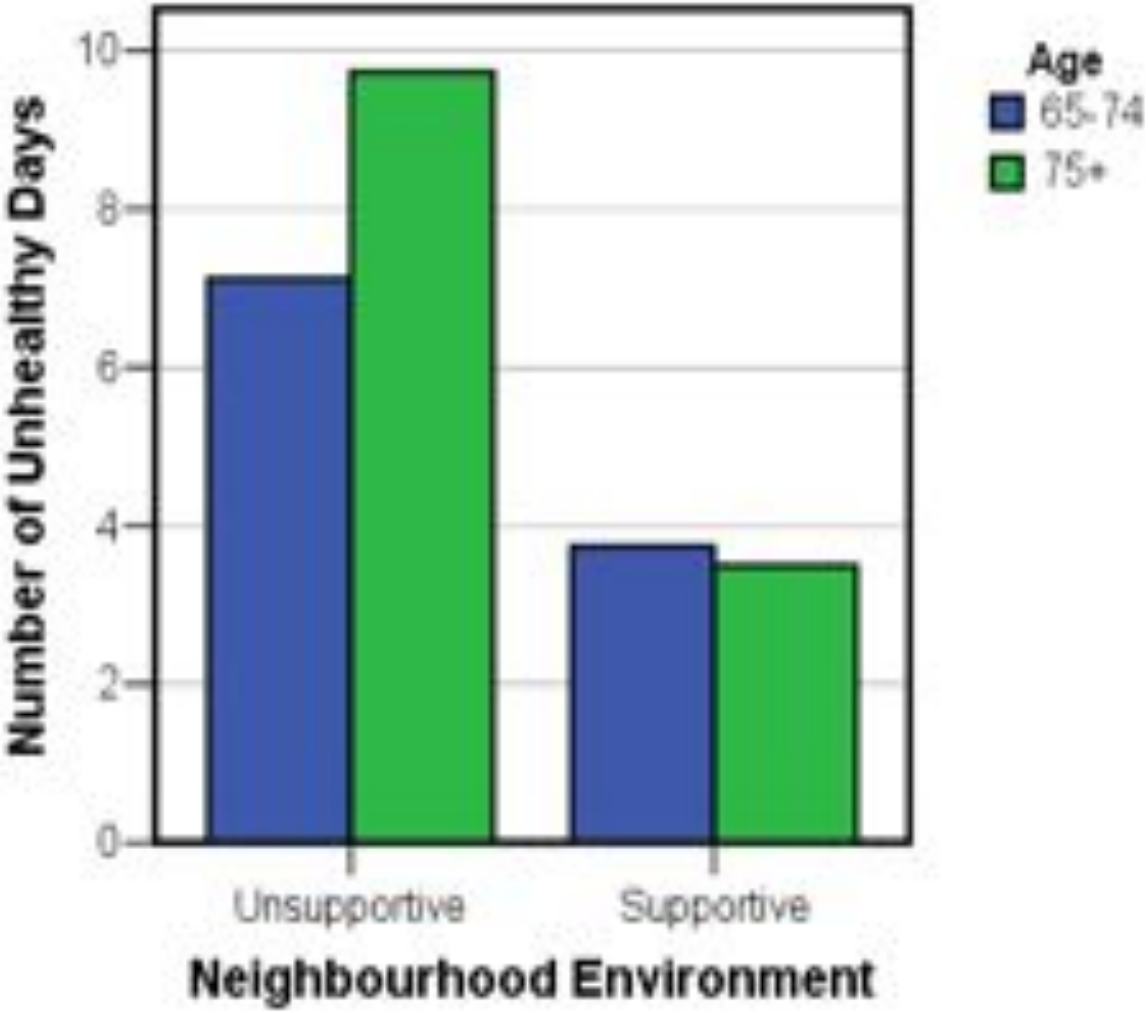
Those who perceive their neighbourhood environments as fairly or very supportive are more likely to be a high-level walker (≥ 2.5 hours/wk)

Supportive Neighbourhood Environments & Time Spent Outdoors



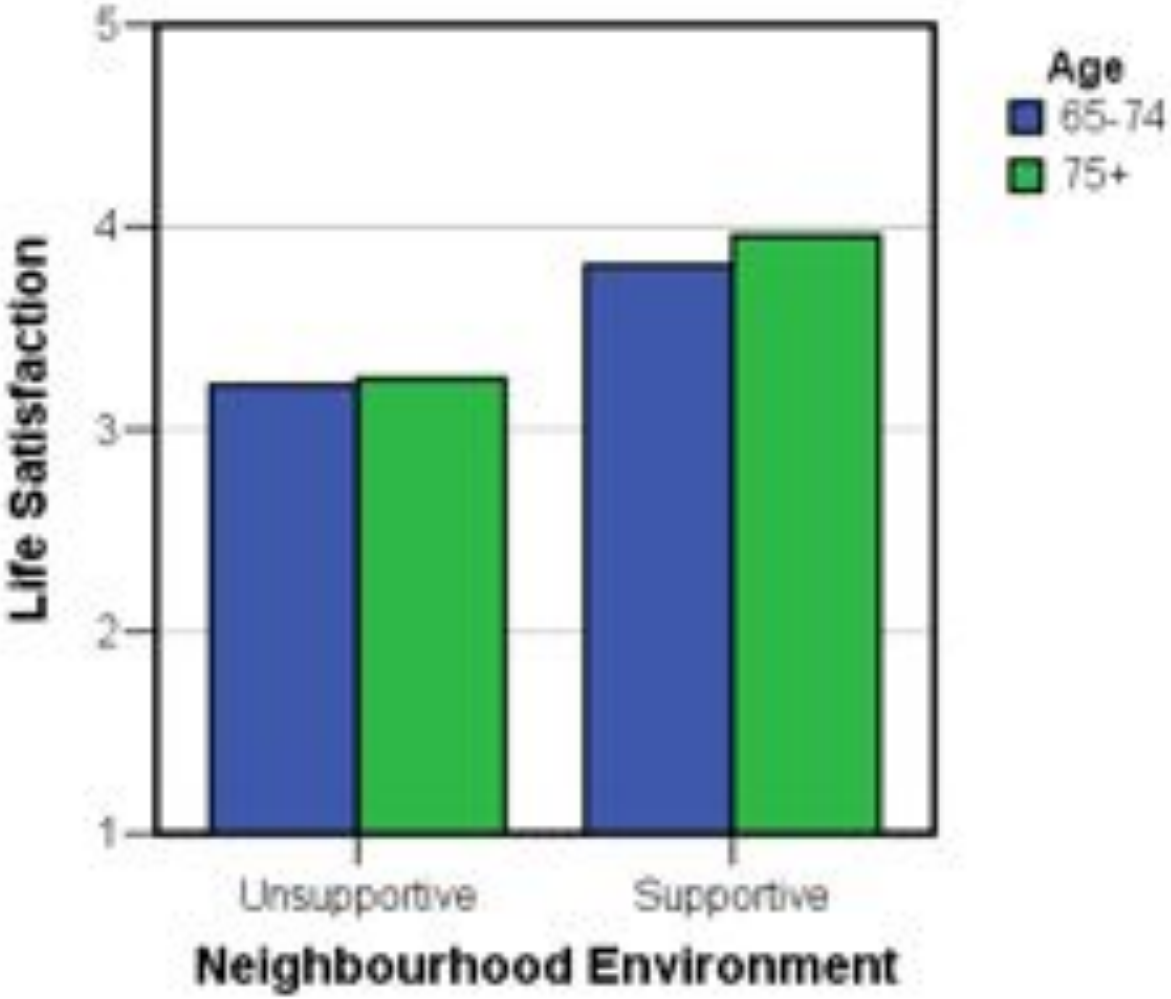
Supportiveness based on environmental attributes is a significant predictor of the time spent outdoors, regardless of functional capability.

Supportive Neighbourhood Environments & Health



People who perceive their neighbourhood as supportive report fewer unhealthy days.

Quality of Neighbourhood & Life Satisfaction



Environmental support accounts for about 30% of the total variance in life satisfaction

Urban form and quality of life

Older people living in low density areas were more positive about their quality of life than those in higher density areas

Participants in villages and small towns rated their QoL highest and those in major city/town centres lowest.

QoL was also rated higher in residential than in mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Benefits and Barriers

Outdoor environments provide opportunities for physical activity, contact with nature and social interaction.

But in-depth interviews of 200 older people showed that at least half faced problems in getting outdoors due to barriers in the environment and lack of supportive facilities

How do perceived quality and accessibility of neighbourhood open spaces affect patterns of activity?

PLEASANTNESS
LACK OF NUISANCE

↔

RECREATIONAL WALKING

GOOD PATHS TO OPEN SPACE
GOOD FACILITIES

↔

WALKING FOR TRANSPORT

A more pleasant neighbourhood open space is associated with a 40% increase in the likelihood of achieving more than 1 hour of recreational walking per week

What features facilitate recreational activity in outdoor spaces?

Pleasantness of open space

- clean and well-maintained
- attractive trees and plants
- good for children's play
- good for chatting with people

What facilitates recreational activity?

Lack of nuisance

Young people: "They probably won't harm you, but they look so threatening. They march up the road and ride the bicycles up and down the pavement."

What features facilitate walking outdoors?

Perceived quality of paths

- paths easy to walk on
- enjoyable to walk on
- no obstacles to getting to open spaces

Unobstructed walkways

- obstructions from poorly maintained paving seen as hazardous

- cars parked on pavement are major problem

Light traffic on walking routes

Controlled crossing points

- pelican crossings preferred (ease of use and safety)
- audible signal to be provided
- short crossing distance important

Frequent, warm, supportive seating, well maintained and safe

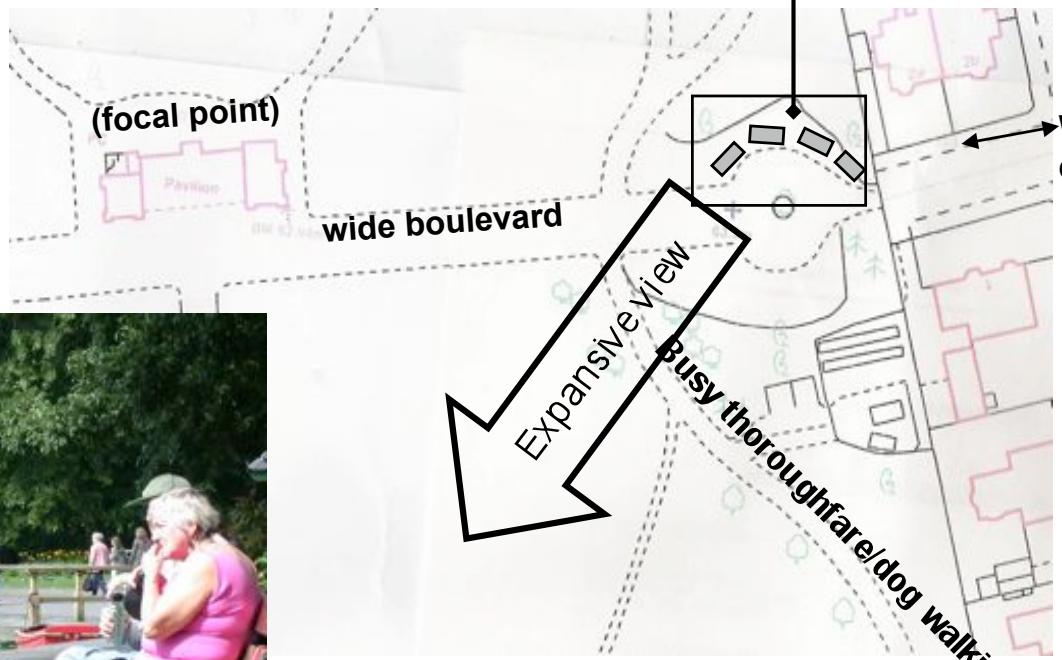
"Arm rests are good for getting up and down"

Sufficient, well maintained, safe and open toilets

Sufficient, well maintained, safe and open toilets

Design guidance is on our website www.idgo.ac.uk

(referenced in WHO Age Friendly Cities Guide 2007)



a crescent of seats,
toilets nearby,
good views
and wildlife

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Does where you live make a difference?

Do you live within 10 minutes' walk of a local open space?

Do you live in sheltered accommodation or a care home?

Choice-based Conjoint Questionnaire: Examples

❖ QUESTION 1 ❖

☐ Park 1	
High quality pavement to the park	No seats en route
Medium traffic	Few seats in the park

☐ Park 2	
Low quality pavement to the park	Some seats en route
Heavy traffic (including lorries)	Many seats in the park

Which park would you prefer as your local one?

❖ QUESTION 2 ❖

☐ Park 1	
Takes 10 to 15 minutesÕ walk to get to	Dense trees and plants
CafÉ and toilets	Signs of vandalism

☐ Park 2	
Takes 5 to 10 minutesÕ walk to get to	No trees and few plants
Toilets only	No particular nuisance

Potential trade-off scenarios among diverse open space features

1.Nuisance versus facilities

Participants would accept having some level of nuisance (such as undesirable youngsters hanging around) if they could also have **facilities such as cafe and toilets** in their local open space

2. Trees versus traffic

Participants would rather have an open space with few trees (both along paths and in the park) but **light traffic** than one with heavy traffic and lots of trees.

3. Trees versus facilities

Participants were willing to trade lack of facilities (such as cafe and/or toilets) in order to have **tree-lined paths and dense trees and plants in their local open space.**

Are there distinct preferences among different groups of older people?

1. **People who live with someone compared with people who live alone**
   - For those who live with someone: facilities and car park
   - For those who live alone: distance to a local open space and trees along the footpath on the way
2. **People who have difficulty in getting around**
   - Provision of seats both at the open space and en route

What should I’DGO study next?

I’DGO TOO: Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors 2
EPSRC EQUAL Programme 5

I’DGO TOO

Work at three different levels of detail, to research:

- the implications of high-density urban housing on residential outdoor space, such as gardens and balconies,
- pedestrian-friendly approaches (such as Home Zones) in street environments and
- the practical consequences of using tactile paving (designed to assist people with visual impairment) for older people in the urban environment

Home Zones and shared spaces

Are Home Zones a good solution for an ageing population?

How does implementation of shared space projects such as Home Zones affect older people's access outdoors and quality of life?

Does implementation of such schemes result in environments where older people

- Go outside more often?
- Spend more time outside in the local environment?
- Have better social networks?
- Have a better quality of life?

Home Zones and shared spaces

I'DGO TOO: places for people

Visit our website www.idgo.ac.uk

INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR GETTING OUTDOORS

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