

## ABSTRACT

Housing Type and the Social Contact of Older Adults

By: Timera Temple

M.S. Thesis, Housing and Consumer Economics

University of Georgia

The literature on the health of older adults supports the importance of socialization toward creating positive outcomes in later life. Housing may have the capacity to encourage or diminish socialization, most directly through visits with neighbors. Additionally, the presence of friends and acquaintances may have the power to mitigate negative outcomes from potential hazards of living alone. Using cross-sectional data from the 2006 Health and Retirement Study (HRS), this study offers a preliminary investigation into the relationship between housing type and social contact with neighbors. The life-course developmental perspective suggests that contexts, including residential arrangements, family circumstances, and individual resources, play an important part in the dynamics that affect an individual's social integration. Using this framework, controls were selected and a series of regressions were performed. Results demonstrate that within the over 65 population and compared with single family housing, a positive relationship between apartments and the number of social visits per month with neighbors or people who live nearby. The magnitudes of these coefficients suggest a dramatic effect, around 6 social visits per month. However, while the analysis tries to deal with issues of sample selection, there is possible endogeneity between the dependent and independent variables, requiring further analysis.