



The Effect of an Acclimation Program on Senior Adults Entering Long-term Care Facilities

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Introduction

- Aging population anticipated to reach 2.1 billion by 2050, leading to a greater need for long-term care (LTC) to ensure health, safety, and wellbeing of older adults with comorbid conditions
- LTC encompasses services that meet personal care and/or health needs for those who can no longer independently perform daily activities
- Transition from home to LTC can be difficult and result in overall functional decline
- Facility environment can influence wellbeing and ability to thrive
- Research into LTC facilities indicates that residents often have issues adjusting to the environment, including anxiety, depression, confusion, loneliness, sadness, loss of independence, and diminished control over their life
- These can lead to a decrease in quality of life (QoL)
- Need for initiatives to help ease relocation process and prevent QoL decline

- **Adaptation** is the process of relocating to LTC, accepting facility as home, changing feelings of rejection, and forming a positive impression of new life in facility
- Existing research indicates that the following are important to consider during transition to LTC:
 - Spatial orientation
 - Psychological support
 - Staff preparation
 - Client engagement
- Facilitating acclimation to LTC should consider personal factors of resident and environmental factors of facility

- **Study Purpose:** To design and implement a program to ease the transition for senior adults as they enter LTC facilities, preventing rapid decline secondary to this transition

Methods

Research Design

- Investigator-developed facility resource pamphlet given to new residents upon entering LTC. Contents included:
 - Facility tips and resources
 - Advice from current residents
 - Leisure and enrichment opportunities
 - Memory activity
- Investigator-developed interest survey used to gain information from residents to create pamphlet: 10 questions concerning participants' experience moving from home to facility
- Adult Wellbeing Assessment: 8 question QoL assessment for older adults administered pre and post intervention to determine pamphlet's impact on QoL
- Follow-up visits to ensure participant understanding of pamphlet contents and purpose

Population and Site

- Project implemented at The Crossings at Riverchase senior living community
- Participants: 7 older adults aged 60 years and older who had resided in the facility for one year or less.

Recruitment

- Convenience sampling: informational flyer and word-of-mouth
- Purposive criteria: only participants living in facility 1 year or less considered eligible

Data Collection and Analysis

- Paper surveys utilized due to age of participants and lack of access to technology
- QoL data analyzed using basic descriptive statistics and unpaired t test

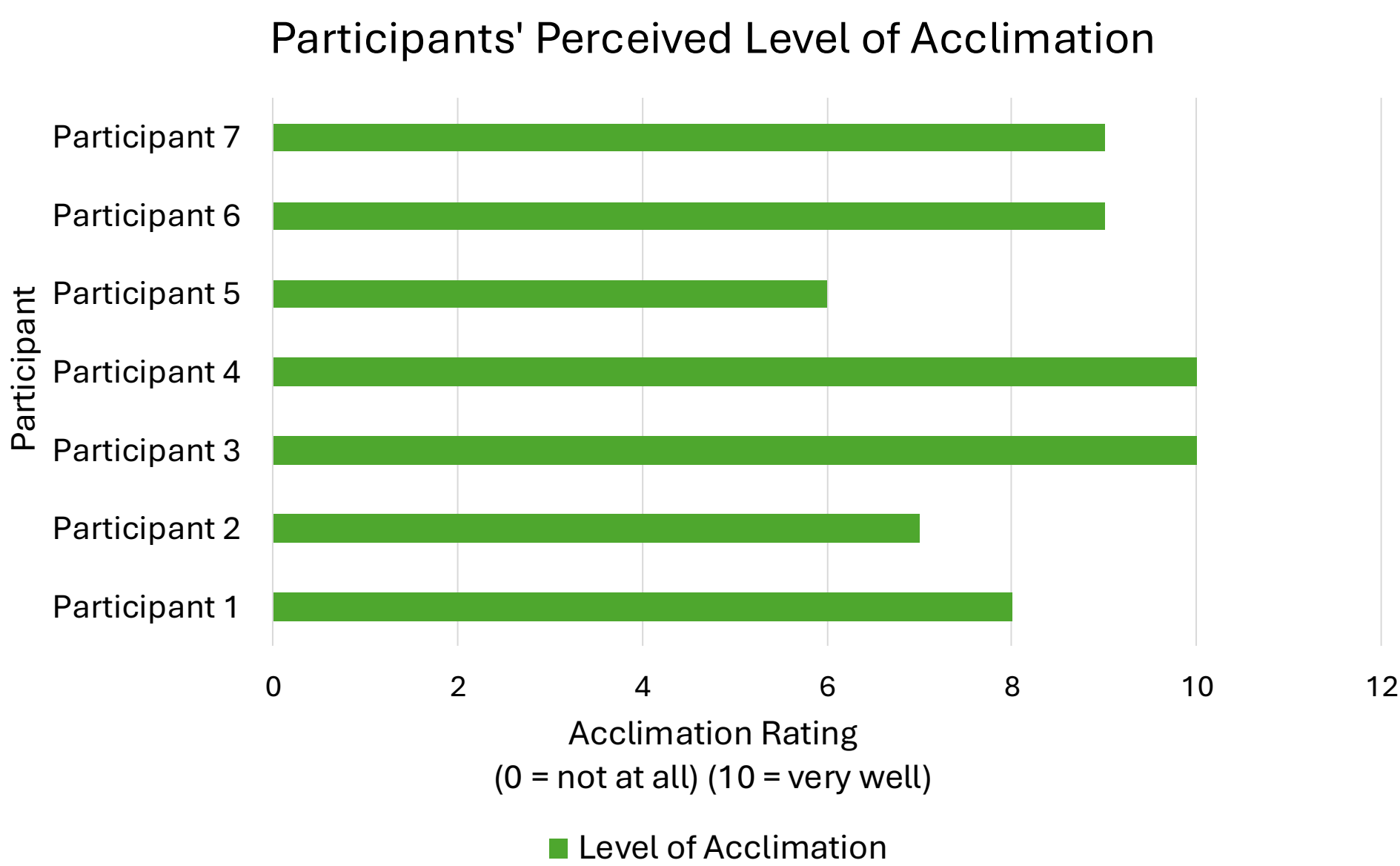
Results

Participants

- 86% female (n = 6)
- 14% male (n = 1)
- 71% Assisted Living (n = 5)
- 29% Independent Living (n = 2)
 - Mean age: 81
- Mean length of residency in facility: 8 months

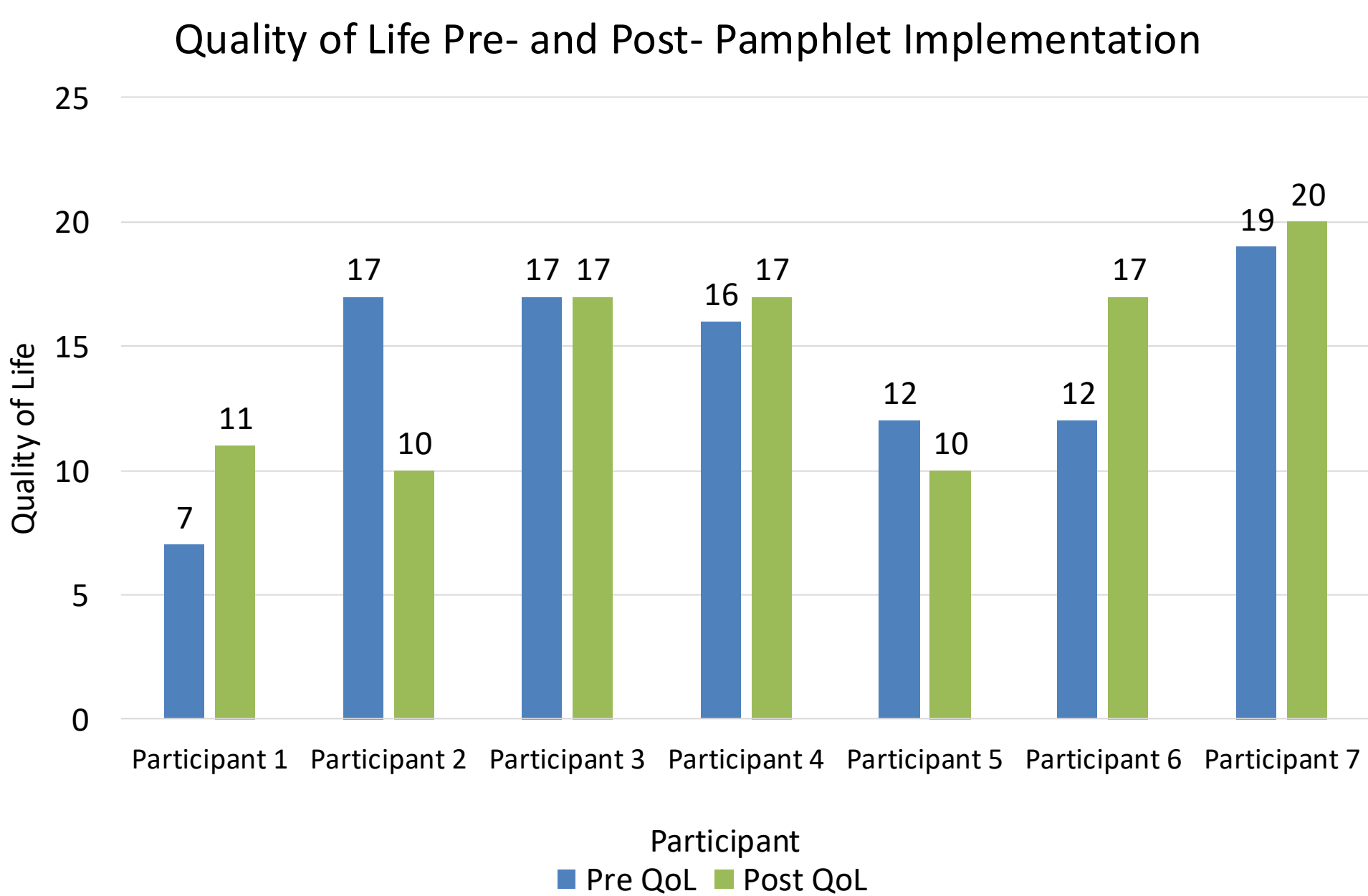
Interest Survey Data

- 10-point Likert scale, 0 = not at all; 10 = very well
- Mean response to perceived level of acclimation: 8 out of 10
 - 43% (n = 3) discussed barriers to acclimation
 - 57% (n =4) had no issues with acclimation



Quality of Life Data

- 57% (n = 4) demonstrated an increase in QoL
- 29% (n = 2) demonstrated a decrease in QoL
 - 14% (n = 1) QoL scores stayed the same
- No statistically significant difference in mean QoL scores pre- and post- intervention (t test, $p = 0.8993$)



Discussion

Major Findings

- Results indicate that an acclimation program can have a positive impact on QoL for older adults entering LTC
- Mean QoL change was not statistically significant. May be attributed to small sample size and confounding factors
- Decreased QoL potentially due to participant lack of understanding and interest in resource, as well as confounding factors (loss of home, spouse, and independence)
- Increased QoL potentially due to personal attitudes, receptivity to resource pamphlet, positive environmental factors of facility

Limitations

- Small sample size, participant demographics, site logistics, investigator-developed survey and resource pamphlet

Conclusion

Implications

- Transition process can be difficult for older adults. It is important for OTPs to understand the impact of transition on QoL and occupational participation to potentially decrease negative symptoms and help residents acclimate well to their new home

Future Research

- Could be conducted in SNFs/nursing homes with wider demographic range to determine effect of acclimation program on QoL in different settings
- RCT within first week of admission to LTC to determine effect on QoL

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