



# Newsletter

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## Welcome to the third instalment of the HMinfo Newsletter for 2021.

In this newsletter, we introduce the new HMinfo consumer factsheet on home fire safety for older people and people with disability, we look into interesting publications relevant to home modifications and inform you about the upcoming Home Modifications conference, organised by MOD.A.

## NEW HMinfo RESOURCES

### Consumer Factsheet: Fire Safety - Escape

This factsheet aims to give information on the implementation of an Escape Plan for the place where older people and people with disabilities live. It will provide guidance on how to prepare and practise the safe Escape Plan, considering the layout and contents of the home and the abilities of everyone who lives there.



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## RECENT HMinfo RESOURCES

### Consumer Factsheet: Home safety resources for older people

This factsheet aims to provide tools and checklists that older people and their carers and/or family can use to make their home safer and reduce the chances of injuries. Common hazards in the home are floor mats or rugs that are not level, slippery floors, poorly lit spaces, cables under rugs, smoke alarms that have not been checked or replaced for a long time, etc. Slips and falls and home fires are the most common results of these home issues which can have dangerous or even fatal consequences for older people.



If you are an older person or caring for an older person and you are concerned about your/their safety in the home, there are checklists that can help you identify hazardous elements and guides with recommendations on how to mitigate the risks.

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## **Evidence-Based Practice Review: Self-assessment tools for person-environment fit**

This factsheet aims to explore and determine the existing self-assessment tools or the tools that can be transformed into self-assessment tools of functional ability and the appropriateness of the home. Older people and people with disabilities have decreased functionality in the home compared to people without disabilities. Assessments of their functionality as well as of their home environment can lead to the prescription of home modifications and/or assistive technology that can improve their quality of life in the home. During periods of self-isolation and physical distancing, self-assessment tools can prove valuable for the preservation of the health of the tenants as well as the health professionals.

Systematic research through the HMinfo Library, Google Scholar, and Standard Electronic Databases was performed and 36 publications were retrieved. 8 studies were analysed and included in the review. Only one tool (CASPAR) was found to fulfill all requirements for a self-assessment tool of the person-home fit. A Telehealth version of the tool seems to be more effective in providing the necessary information for Occupational Therapists to be able to prescribe home modifications. A self-assessment tool for the person-home environment fit should be developed and scientifically tested, utilizing existing tools elements.

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## **Occasional research paper: PDF Accessibility Report**

This report aims to highlight the accessibility of the documents found on four different organizations' websites. The purpose of this is to highlight the accessibility issues found in PDFs hosted on the internet and what these issues mean for users with disabilities. This report is useful for both document creators and managers who wish to better understand the components of an accessible PDF and how to assess their own document creation processes.

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## **Occasional research paper: Web Accessibility Audit**

Web accessibility is aimed at allowing access for all on the internet. This means following the relevant guidelines and standards to ensure that barriers are not placed in front of potential users. The aim of this audit is to evaluate the websites of four different organisations in terms of web accessibility. This audit is then used to highlight common errors with respect to web accessibility and what these may mean for users.

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## Occasional research paper: Web Accessibility Guide

Web accessibility is governed by standards and best practice methods that aim to provide access to all potential users of a website. These standards are often not requirements for website design and are often ignored. This guide aims to provide a useful tool to allow web designers and owners to evaluate their websites for accessibility and explains many of the common pitfalls with respect to web accessibility. The guide makes use of both the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the Usability Guidelines to inform best practices and allow users to make informed choices regarding their own particular needs.

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## Occasional research paper: Writing Accessible PDFs Using Word

This guide to writing accessible PDFs in Microsoft Word is provided to give users the tools to make their documents accessible to a wider audience. It is intended for anyone who creates PDF documents for public use, using Microsoft Word as the document creator and who is familiar with that software. While the focus is on Microsoft Word the principles outlined in the guide may be applied to other document creation software at the user's discretion.

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## Other RESOURCES

### Barriers to the Initiation of Home Modifications for Older Adults for Fall Prevention

Wiseman, J. M., Stamper, D. S., Sheridan, E., Caterino, J. M., Quatman-Yates, C. C., & Quatman, C. E. (2021). *Barriers to the Initiation of Home Modifications for*

*Older Adults for Fall Prevention. Geriatric orthopaedic surgery & rehabilitation, 12, 21514593211002161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21514593211002161>*

This is a paper with an aim to identify potential barriers to hiring a provider to carry out (install or build) home modifications, intended to prevent falls of older people. The nature and methodology of the study makes the results relevant to a single geographic area in the Midwest United States but could be indicative of other areas in the US as well. The authors investigated the impact of two types of parameters on the assignment of the work of home modifications: 1. Social parameters (socioeconomic status and gender of the client and cost of the services) and, 2. Technical parameters (availability of contractor, waiting time and time to complete the works, etc).

The study concluded that there are many technical, social, and economic parameters that might be preventing older people to get home modifications in the specific area of the US. The study needs to be replicated and performed in other areas of the country to present indicative results and be useful for policymakers.

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## **Home safety evaluation – getting it right**

*Noralyn Davel Pickens, Rochelle Mendonca, Suzanne Perea Burns & Roger O. Smith (2020) Home safety evaluation - getting it right, Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, DOI: 10.1080/17483107.2020.1805033*

This paper describes the results of the evaluation of HESTIA, a home safety assessment app from professionals. The methodology included two focus groups: one with experienced assessors and one with early-career assessors, who watched a training video about the app and answered questions on its usability and value. The results of the study focus on two areas: 1. How the two categories of focus groups' participants evaluate the app based on different criteria, and 2. The nature of the comments and suggestions the participants made.

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## **Home modifications and repurposing: perspectives on the accessibility, affordability, and attractiveness**

Linda R. Struckmeyer, Nichole Campbell, Carlyn Ellison, Sherry Ahrentzen & Sherrilene Classen (2021) Home modifications and repurposing: perspectives on the accessibility, affordability, and attractiveness, Disability and Rehabilitation, DOI: 10.1080/09638288.2021.1910866

The present study investigates how repurposing of home elements and spaces can offer people with functional mobility and visual impairments aesthetically acceptable solutions that increase their independence in the home. The methodology included focus groups of people with the previously mentioned disabilities and of design and healthcare professionals reviewing their needs in the home or the needs they are called to fulfil, for each group, respectively. Additionally, the participants commented on case studies presented to them by the researchers. A number of themes arise

from the analysis of the acquired data, including accessibility, cost and appearance issues. The study provides interesting information for further issues within each theme.

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## EVENTS

### 2021 Home Modifications Conference (November 2021)

This year's conference "Ramping it Up" is being held at a critical junction between periods of disruption and promised reform in the disability support and aged care systems.

Living at home is the preference of older people and people with disability. The Home Modifications sector plays a crucial role in enabling people to live in homes designed to give them dignity and independence. With big changes ahead for the NDIS and aged care there has never been a more important time to come together to highlight that impact and to plan for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

And never a more important time for our voices to be heard by funders and policymakers.

So get ready to meet up, discuss and trade ideas with the sector as we explore all things Home Modifications over one and a half days.

[Link](#)

Any suggestions or feedback you may have on our newsletter would be greatly appreciated, so please feel free to contact us at [hminfo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:hminfo@unsw.edu.au). To unsubscribe from future HMinfo newsletters, please click [unsubscribe](#).

