A Study on Relieving the Loneliness of The Elderly Living Alone through Lighting

Purpose In the book “Aging, Death, and Human Longevity - A Philosophical Inquiry” Christine Overall, a Canadian philosopher, discusses new types of conflicts and controversies that can appear as the life expectancy of people rises to 120, thanks to advanced medical technology. It demonstrates the fact that maintaining a high quality of life is crucial beyond extending the life expectancy of people. In particular, seniors living alone feel more depressed than seniors living with other people and suffer from a low quality of life, due to their physical challenges, rare interaction with others and a sense of solitude. To solve the issues of solitary death and suicide of the elderly population, which are social issues beyond personal issues, it is necessary to offer services that can relieve their loneliness in their homes, where they spend most of their time.

Method: The causes of loneliness of the elderly living alone and the linkage to their physical and emotional characteristics were explored through preceding studies published at home and abroad. The purpose is to create methods of relieving the sense of solitude and loneliness of the elderly and apply them to their homes. Based on the results, indoor plan for relieving the loneliness of seniors were presented, as a light therapy using residential lighting.

Results and Discussion: In living spaces, lighting is a critical medium that forms a relation between people and the environment; it also has a tremendous impact on the physical and mental health of residents. Most existing guidelines and standards for seniors appeared to have focused on illumination requirements for specific tasks. This study explains why the elderly population living alone feels lonely, as the population rises around the world, and presents a unique residential lighting plan accordingly. This study explains the method of controlling light that affects the depression, sleep disorder, and behavioral disorder of the elderly from psychological and physiological aspects by properly mixing natural daylight and artificial lighting, as therapeutic lighting. Such lighting system that takes into account the individual needs of residents could effectively reduce the sense of solitude and loneliness of the elderly living alone.

References

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