
Changes in the patterns of healthy mobility of the elderly during the Great Recession in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona, Spain

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Abstract

The increase of the senior population in the developed countries, which in the next 30 years will represent more than 30%, has forced public health policies to promote active mobility, especially walking. In this way, the objective is to analyze the changes in healthy mobility patterns between 2006 and 2014, with the economic crisis as context. Although there are not many studies on the effects of the crisis on mobility, all the existing ones agree in emphasizing that the crisis has generated important changes in the day life of the society, and therefore the daily mobility.

To carry it out, we have used the 2006 and 2014 edition of the EMEF daily mobility survey (2006-2014), which is done throughout the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona. The healthy mobility patterns of 2006 and 2014 were compared by age and gender using the chisquare test or t-test.

The results show that seniors have upgraded their healthy mobility patterns during the crisis. There has been a decrease in immobility and an increase in the number of journeys and minutes walked. Even so, significant differences were observed according to the density of the residential environment. In compact and highdensity urban environment, seniors have been able to significantly increase travel time walking, and to consolidate healthy mobility patterns. Instead, in lowdensity urban centers this phenomenon has not occurred.

The economic crisis has highlighted the potential of the different build environments to compensate or exacerbate the physical limitations of seniors, allowing or limiting the ability to establish or improve their healthy mobility patterns.

Keywords: Elderly, Healthy Mobility Patterns, Economic Crisis, Metropolitan Region of Barcelona

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