

Thematic Panel 11 – Challenges to ageing in place: Potential risks of isolation and abandonment for frail older people living at home

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Challenges to ageing in place: Potential risks of isolation and abandonment for frail older people living at home

Conveners:

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Discussants:

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Over the last decades, one crucial priority defined by policy makers in order to deal with the mounting care pressure has been 'ageing in place', which means supporting older people to remain autonomous within their own homes as long as possible, thus guaranteeing them – in addition to a reduction of more expensive solutions, like residential care – a better quality of life. Ageing in place requires, however, some specific pre-conditions such as, for instance, an active formal and informal support network and an adequate housing context. Otherwise, substantial risks of social and spatial isolation for frail older people may arise.

Against this background, this panel invites contributions to discuss the risks potentially associated with ageing in place at the European and international level, adopting different research strategies and disciplinary perspectives. Relevant research questions that may be addressed include:

1. What housing contexts favour/hamper 'ageing in place', by affecting

care arrangement strategies, the quality of life of frail older people and, therefore, their chance of remaining at home? Housing contexts should be considered in a “triple” dimension: the conditions of the dwelling, the characteristics of the building, and the surrounding environment in which older people live.

2. What are the main risks associated with ‘ageing in place’? Special attention should be paid to isolation and abandonment, in psychological, social, and material care terms.

3. What role does public policy play in supporting ageing-in-place practices? What innovations could help reduce the risk of isolation? Reference here is to social innovations, technological innovations and policy innovations, also in terms of regulation, and of the interplay between housing, urban and territorial settings, and care and health policies.