

Community-based complex interventions to sustain independence in older people, stratified by frailty: a systematic review and network meta-analysis

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

Which community services are best for helping older people to be independent?

Key messages

- Due to a lack of robust evidence, the benefits and risks of most types of community services for older people are unclear.
- Individualised care planning, where medication is adjusted and there are regular follow-ups, probably helps people stay living at home.

What are community services for older people?

There are many kinds of community services for older people. For example, in some services, everyone is given exercise and dietary advice or an individualised care plan. These often aim to help older people age independently.

What was the study about?

Maintaining independence is important in later life.

We wanted to find out which community services work best:

- to help people stay living at home, and
- to do day-to-day activities independently.

We reviewed findings from previous studies that have tested different community services for older people. We combined these findings and compared different types of service with one another. We rated our confidence in the evidence.

What did we find?

We found 129 studies with 74,946 people. We found 63 different kinds of service have been studied. The studies were carried out in diverse populations around the world.

Individualised care planning, where medication is adjusted and there are regular follow-ups, may help people age independently. It probably increases the chance of staying at home slightly. It may also help with doing day-to-day activities very slightly.

Exercise and dietary advice may also help people stay living at home.

However, there was some evidence that some services may reduce independence.

We do not know what effect most services have.

What are the limitations of the evidence?

We generally had little confidence in the evidence because studies were small, and information was missing.

How current is the evidence?

The evidence is up to date to August 2021.

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