

# ASSESSING THE VALUE OF OUTDOOR SPACE IN NURSING HOMES: A CASE STUDY FOR ATHENS GERIATRIC HOME (GREECE)

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### 1 ABSTRACT

*This study investigates how the outdoor environment at the Athens Geriatric Home is experienced by its residents and staff. The aim is to raise awareness of the role of the outdoor environment on how it affects the experience and the use of care facilities in Greece by elderly people living in them. Access to green outdoors is widely documented in an increasing number of studies to have multiple physical and psychological benefits on humans in a number of international case studies. However, the evaluation of outdoor space usage as an important component to improve health and quality of life at Greek senior care settings is still given no attention and there is no record of research on environmental preferences of outdoor environments at nursing homes. In Greece, very few of elderly people are privileged enough to access and enjoy an outdoor environment, even if it is not successfully designed. In this context, the authors conducted a pilot research on the Athens Geriatric Home situated in the urban core of Athens, the oldest one in Greece (1873), in order to collect information on size, placement and quality of green spaces, using the Seniors Outdoor Survey. Residents and employees reported their experiences from the gardens, the frequency of their visit and the garden features they prefer. Results revealed the demand for more available seating, mainly in a circular arrangement, properly arranged routes to facilitate their movements, clear views from the routes and open spaces, intense colors and special meeting points.*

#### 1.1 Keywords

Outdoor environment, gerontology, landscape architecture, elderly people, environmental assessment