

Well-being and Materiality

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Example 1: The dementia and dress project

- ESRC funded study with Julia Twigg (PI), 2012-2014
- Qualitative methods – interviews, observations, ‘wardrobe interviews’, group discussions – clothing, fabrics, photos as prompts
- **Sites:** 3 Kent care homes, 15 domestic settings
- **Sample:** 32 case studies of people with dementia, 28 care home workers, 29 family carers and relatives

Clothes as ‘memory’ and ‘biographical’ objects (Ash 1996, Hoskins 1998)

*“That row there are some old working clothes which I’m forbidden to throw out! [...] Occasionally sometimes when he’s gardening he’ll put them on, **makes him feel like he’s back at work.**”*
[Jane, carer, age 64]



Transitions to care - 'small things' (Hamlett and Hoskins 2013)



Social interactions, tactile engagements (Twigg 2010)



“...they’ll touch especially the green velvet [...] and they go, “Ooh.” They do respond to different textures, especially the soft velvety ones. [...] They might not know what colour it is.[...] but it’s the *feel* of it.”

[Jo, care-worker, 56]

Example 2: Buildings in the Making project

Team: Sarah Nettleton (PI), Ellen Annandale, Chrissy Buse, Sian Beynon-Jones, Daryl Martin (York), Lindsay Prior (Belfast), Julia Twigg (Kent)

- 3 year ESRC funded UK study (August 2015 until July 2018), following care home/extra care housing projects
- Methods:
 - Ongoing 'ethnography of practice', following design projects, observing site visits and meetings, drawing sessions, design reviews, team meetings
 - Qualitative interviews, documentary analysis

How are ideas about well-being and care translated into the built environment? How do architects think about the end user?

Heritage, materials and designing spaces for care

‘...these are specific pieces with a patina and a life history which does really help, particularly new facilities feeling like they’ve got a bit of history to them, much like the residents I think. You want people to feel comfortable in that setting, and comfort isn’t just about creating something which is inoffensive and maybe physically comfortable, but somehow validates their life experience.’

Architect, interview 16

Making room for things: a personalised approach

- Creating spaces for possessions, opportunities for personalisation (Geboy 2009, Davis 2009)
- Deep window-sills
- Memory boxes
- Personalised memory-scapes



Tensions: heritage-isation

- More generic approaches in communal areas: potential for interest/way finding (Kelly et al. 2011)
But...*Whose* history? Exclusions
- Fixing older people in the past (Lovatt 2018), differences between generations
- Restrictions on furniture/objects – fire regulations
- Communal areas – whose objects / tastes choices?

Questions for further research

- Expanding research on role of materials in experiences of well-being/illness/care, interdisciplinary dialogue – special issue *Sociology of Health and Illness* 2018 ‘Materialities of Care’
- Diversity – material culture, care, later life
- Relationships between heritage, new/old in design of buildings for care – tensions and opportunities

If you want to read more...

- Buse, C., Nettleton, S., Martin, D., and Twigg, J. (2016) Imagined bodies: Architects and their constructions of later life, *Ageing & Society*, doi:10.1017/S0144686X16000362: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=10327322&fulltextType=RA&fileId=S0144686X16000362>
- Martin, D., Nettleton, S., Buse, C., Prior, L., & Twigg, J. (2015). Architecture and health care: a place for sociology. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, doi: 10.1111/1467-9566.12284. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9566.12284/abstract>

<https://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/research/current-research/nettleton,-daryl-martin-chrissy-buse/>

- Buse, C. and Twigg, J. (2014). Women with dementia and their handbags: negotiating identity, privacy and 'home' through material culture. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 30(1), 14-22.
- Buse, C. and Twigg, J. (2015). Materializing memories: exploring the stories of people with dementia through dress. *Ageing and Society*, available <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X15000185>

<http://clothingandage.org/>

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- Geboy, L. (2009) Linking Person-Centered Care and the Physical Environment: 10 Design Principles for Elder and Dementia Care Staff, *Alzheimer's Care Today*, 10(4):217–220.
- Hamlett, J and Hoskins, L. (2013). Comfort in Small Things? Clothing, Control and Agency in County Lunatic Asylums in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 18(1): 93-114.
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- Lovatt, M. (2018). Becoming at home in residential care for older people: a material culture perspective. *Sociology of Health and Illness* (forthcoming).
- Twigg, J. (2010). Clothing and dementia: A neglected dimension? *Journal of Aging Studies*, 24(4): 223-230.