

Public Abstract

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Environmental demands such as crime and fear of crime can affect how older adults perceive their individual quality of life in the community. The purpose of this research study was to investigate how older adults perceive crime in Ferguson, Missouri and how their quality of life is affected. Data collection for this research began in October 2013 and concluded in June 2014. This research study offers perspectives of crime in Ferguson, Missouri prior to the events of August 2014 that resulted in the death of Michael Brown and initiation of community turmoil.

This qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research study investigated 15 older adults' perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri through auto-photography and photo-elicitation. The results of this research study indicate that concerns with crime in the form of neighborhood disorder do exist. However, for the most part, older adults did not feel that their personal safety was compromised. The presence of lower level neighborhood disorder has created some anxiety about whether signs of physical and social deterioration suggest the onset of future significant decay in the community. These older adults attachment to place combined with their social and physical investment in the community seem to counter the fear of crime they could experience from the presence of neighborhood disorder. Thus, their quality of life has not been gravely affected.