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## Designing restaurant ambiances for retirement homes: a user-based approach

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**Abstract:** This article presents the results of two studies investigating the ambience in the restaurant of retirement homes from the point-of-view of residents. In the first study, we developed a questionnaire to characterize the preferences for different ambience components of 52 residents in three French retirement homes. A second study assessed, through questionnaire and behavioural observation, the impact of three experimental ambiances on the meal pleasure, desire to eat and food intake of 56 residents. Although not the primary determinant of meal pleasure and desire to eat, the physical ambience and its components played a role for residents, and affected food intake, though marginally so. In particular, ambience components in the close environment (notably tableware) had a greater influence. This exploratory research suggests that user-based approaches can have added-value in the design of adapted foodservice and hospitality solutions for the elderly.

**Keywords:** Retirement homes, Ambience, Desire to eat, Meal pleasure, Restaurant; Elderly

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