

## **Civil and Environmental Engineering**

*Present*

# **Healthy and Safe Places for Aging Society**

Speaker:

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Safe and healthy environments are important for older adults to maintain their outdoor physical activity and well-being. Given the increased fall-injuries which are substantial barriers to walking outside among older adults, health and behavioral risk factors for falls were well explored. However, neighborhood environmental factors for the risk of falling remain poorly understood. The studies are to understand the heterogeneity of falls in relation to neighborhood environmental features through multifaceted research approaches. One of the sub-studies explores the characteristics of neighborhood environments (e.g., residential density and vacancy rate) associated with fall injuries reported to emergency medical services (EMS) at the neighborhood level. This study received the Rural and Environment Research Award of the Aging and Public Health Section at the American Public Health Association and was later published in *The Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* in 2017. Another sub-study examines the prospective associations of changes in environmental characteristics (e.g., street conditions, walking surfaces, and physical disorders) with changes in fall occurrence through a longitudinal study. The findings of the studies have underscored the importance of studies examining the risk factors of falls and fall prevention in relation to neighborhood environmental and policy interventions. Thus, environmental interventions to reduce the risk of falling should be considered by public health professionals, gerontologists, transportation professionals, and urban planners interested in helping older adults reduce fall incidents.

**Monday, September 10, 2018**  
**12:20 – 1:10 PM**  
**EII Room 322**