

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Program Evaluation: STUDY GIVES EDEN ALTERNATIVE MIXED REVIEW

The Eden Alternative, the popular program that brings nature into nursing homes, may not lend itself to short-term studies of how residents fare under the approach, new research suggests.

A study recently published in *The Journal of Gerontology* examined Eden's effect on nursing home residents' quality of life. Researchers compared two facilities, one Edenized and one not, run by the same company.

Using MDS and staff report data, the study evaluated residents' immune function, functional status, cognition and survival, as well as the cost of care. Evidence indicated no immediate improvements at the Eden site. In fact, the Eden site reported a significantly higher rate of patients who had fallen, experienced nutritional difficulties or required skilled nursing and hypnotic prescriptions. It also reported higher rates of staff terminations and new hires.

Despite these findings, however, the study's authors admit that the data may not reflect the Eden Alternative's long-term potential: It may just take longer than one year to demonstrate these improvements.

Qualitative observations from the Eden site indicate how positive the change was for staff and residents, the researchers write.

In addition, previous studies of Eden over longer periods of time have found decreased bedsores and restraint use among residents.