

Digital Solutions for Supporting Active and Healthy Aging and Elderly Care

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Keywords: active aging, elderly care, ICT, social work, telemedicine

The presentation discusses how the challenges associated with population ageing, particularly in the context of elderly care and quality of life, can be addressed through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and innovative solutions. Drawing on existing research, it explores older adults' attitudes towards digital technology and their willingness or resistance to engage with ICT. The presentation provides an overview of care-related needs and gaps, as well as the potential for technology to support key areas such as personal care, the provision of a safe and healthy environment, communication, and mental health services. Examples of good practices and relevant case studies are briefly presented to illustrate these applications.

Furthermore, I will analyze the organizational, infrastructural, educational, and motivational prerequisites that are essential for the successful implementation and sustainable operation of ICT-based services. The presentation will address the concrete benefits that the use of digital technology can offer both to older adults and to formal and informal caregivers, including the enhancement of social connectedness, the preservation of independence, and improvements in the quality and efficiency of care. At the same time, attention will be given to the challenges and limitations that may hinder the widespread adoption of digital solutions, such as the lack of digital literacy, disparities in access to resources, or persistent stereotypes about the elderly and technology.

The goal of the presentation is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of digital technologies in elderly care and to contribute to the development of future user-friendly and inclusive solutions. ICT can play a significant role in supporting active ageing and, when necessary, in facilitating care and assistance for older adults (Bene, Móri and Zombory, 2020). Technology should neither be feared nor idealized; its effectiveness depends on whether it is genuinely designed in response to the needs, capacities, and preferences of older people. To ensure this, the development process must actively involve older individuals, their caregivers, and professionals in the social and healthcare sectors.

There is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the impact of technology use in social care and the ways in which social workers engage with ICT. Key questions remain about the effectiveness of online interventions, the professional and ethical issues they raise, and their implications for social inequality. These areas require further research. Moreover, the training of social work students and the ongoing professional development of practitioners must be restructured to place greater emphasis on the development of digital competencies (Perron, Taylor, Glass, Margerum-Leys, 2010; Tóth, 2017; Tóth, 2021).

References

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