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Older people & technological innovations-lifelong, learning and applications for health and wellbeing

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Tetley, Josie; Holland, Caroline; Nederland, Trud; Toorn, Jessica van den; Reichert, Monika; Lis, Katharina; Mason, Anne; Kokol, Peter; Blazun, Helena; Hughes, Jonathan; Waights, Verina and Holland, Simon (2010). Older people & technological innovations-lifelong, learning and applications for health and wellbeing. In: Fourth European Nursing Congress Older Persons: the Future of Care., 4-7 Oct 2010, Rotterdam.

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Version: Accepted Manuscript

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcn.2010.19.issue-s1/issuetoc>

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Older People & Technological Innovations-lifelong learning and applications for health and wellbeing

Introduction

This pan-European project, involving England, Scotland, Germany, The Netherlands and Slovenia, has questioned whether current approaches to introducing new technologies are the best way of enabling older people to learn about and use technology in their everyday lives. Promoting and enhancing the use of ICT with older people is viewed as particularly important as new technologies can enhance access to information, education and support, which can in turn improve physical, psychological and social wellbeing. The project team are therefore exploring whether learning based on self-directed interaction and supported engagement can:

- enhance the opportunities for older people, and their supporters, to engage with existing, new and emerging technologies,
- generate new insights and applications of existing, new and emerging technologies
- identify potential future applications for new technologies that can enhance the health and wellbeing of older people

Methods and materials

In each of the partner countries older people are engaging in workshops where play is used as the main method of enabling people to engage with new and existing technologies. The facilitated technological play will include the use of touch screens, haptic technologies, gaming stations, mobile telephones, traditional computers or equipment designed for use in health and social care situations.

The data collection methods used to capture and evaluate the older people's experiences will include: video recordings of interactive play workshops, participant observation, focus groups and interviews.

As part of the project funding older people taking part in the project will have the opportunity to travel to other European locations to share their local learning experiences with their peers in other countries and settings. The data collection methods used to capture and evaluate the older people's experiences of these exchanges will include: written or spoken and digitally recorded diaries, focus groups and interviews.

Findings

This poster will focus on preliminary findings from country specific workshops and the first pan European learner exchange in The Netherlands, where older people and their supporters will have shared individual and group experiences related to their:

- exploring and learning, about new and emerging technologies
- skills and experience of new and emerging technologies
- greater awareness of, and confidence to use, new technologies
- cultural awareness and connectedness with their peers in other European countries

As the project also aims to explore how older people might use technologies in the context of their everyday lives, this poster will also present any preliminary findings related to older people's views on the ways in which ICT might positively influence their health and wellbeing.

Conclusion

By engaging in this pan European programme of work and exchange activities, this poster aims to demonstrate how we have worked to facilitate older people's use of new technologies. The work presented will also consider the ways in which older people feel that new and emerging technologies can be used to enhance individual and collective health, wellbeing and social connectedness. Finally preliminary findings will also be presented that illustrate similarities and differences of older people's experiences across European locations.