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Module Name: Introduction to Independent Research Skills

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Topic: Digital exclusion in health access among the elderly in the UK

1) Review question

How does digital exclusion affect access to Telehealth services among older adults in the UK?

2) Objectives

- To identify the main barriers to Telehealth access for older adults in the UK
- To examine the impact of digital exclusion on healthcare access, use and outcomes among older adults
- To explore strategies that may reduce digital inequalities in Telehealth delivery for older people
- To identify gaps in the current UK evidence base relevant to health and social care practice

3) Rationale

Digital health is expanding across the NHS through online consultations, apps and remote monitoring (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022), but older adults are not benefiting equally from this shift. Age UK (2025) reported that around 2.4 million older people in the UK have limited internet use, and 31% say poor IT skills stop them going online, which shows how common digital exclusion remains in later life. This is important because Telehealth often depends on digital devices, internet access and the ability to navigate online systems. NHS England has highlighted that inclusive digital healthcare is needed to improve access and reduce inequality, making digital inclusion a significant issue for health and social care practice (NHS England, 2023). Recent research also shows that older adults face clear barriers to digital health use, reinforcing that this is a current and evidence-based concern (Brundle et al., 2024).

4) Methods

A scoping review will be used to map the existing peer-reviewed literature on digital exclusion and Telehealth in the UK. The review will follow the scoping review framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), which includes identifying the research question, searching for relevant studies, selecting studies, recording the data and reporting the results. Databases such as PubMed, NHR, Google Scholar will be searched using keywords such as "digital exclusion," "Telehealth," "digital inclusion," "older adults," and "UK." The review will include English primary and secondary research studies published mainly within the last five years. The data will be analysed to identify barriers, impacts and possible solutions.

5) Ethical considerations

Secondary research involves analyzing pre-existing data rather than collecting new data from participants. Ethical considerations include ensuring human oversight and not overrelying on technologies, ensuring transparency of public data disclosure, maintaining confidentiality of subjects and data is used for public good (UK Statistic Authority, 2022). This study will use published literature only, so no direct contact with participants will take place and formal ethical approval is not to be required. However, ethical research practice will still be maintained by reporting findings accurately, avoiding plagiarism and acknowledging sources properly.

Reference List

Age UK (2025) Facts and figures about digital inclusion and older people. Available at: [internet-use-statistics-june-2024.pdf](#) (Accessed: 8 July 2026)

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Department of Health and Social Care (2022). A Plan for Digital Health and Social Care. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-digital-health-and-social-care/a-plan-for-digital-health-and-social-care> (Accessed 8 July 2026).

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