

Name: Margaret Habiba Nkem-Ajoku

Student Number:1809941

Name of Lecturer:Joana Walsh

Course Code:**BMHP6009**

Course Title:Living With Care:The older person

The accelerating pace of global modernization and growth in the human population has led to interest in finding ways to provide optimum care to the various age stratas in the society. Writers suggest that the emergence of technology and continuing improvement in technological devices is aimed at ensuring goods and services make life better for people.

With the rapid growth of the population of the elderly in the world the demand for the health care system is increased accordingly. This paper is focused on the role technology plays amongst the elderly bringing to the fore arguments that proffer benefits and disadvantages or negatives attributed to the use of technology. In this debate the writer of this essay was on the affirmative side.

Writers, Nguyen et al (2020) are of the view that injuries sustained from falls among the elderly population is a major public health concern. Reports from this study also suggests that yearly thirty percent of the worlds elderly aged over 65 fall and require assistance with mobility thereafter. The writers, Nguyen et al (2020) maintain that monitoring the status of the elderly via surveillance technology helps mitigate this problem. Again long lie falls amongst the elderly lead to dire consequences like dehydration, hypothermia and pressure sores however the emergence of fall detectors reduces the time the elderly remain on the floor. Another benefit of the application of sensors is that certain health problems are detected and identified in advance without service users identifying these problems or raising the alarm themselves (Cambridge Centre for housing and planning research). Elderly people with the help of sensors have been able to live independently in their homes for longer thereby reducing the need to move into residential homes. Stirling and Burgess (2020) suggest that in the United Kingdom the policy drive for digital care is focused on a preventative agenda.

In addition it is argued that assistive technology played a positive significant role during the covid pandemic. Writers, Chandon et al (2021) posit that pandemics such as covid 19 can cause serious health risks especially among people living with dementia and their care givers. In the writers view covid 19 lockdown restraints causes loneliness, depression and anxiety as a result of limited interaction with family. Assisted devices such as grandpads were found to have played a pivotal role in mitigating stress and loneliness caused by the pandemic, reducing the need for hospitalization and home visits which further reduced the costs linked with caregiver services.

Again technologies with conferencing help elderly people with dementia interact and socialize with friends and family thereby reducing the anxiety and agitation and imparting positive emotions. Also the use of surveillance cameras have been argued to reduce the incidents of abuse in care homes.

What number of the elderly rely on technology? Reports show that within the age group of 65-74 age group their use of technology rose from 52 percent in 2011 to 83 percent in 2019 (Office of National Statistics)

On the side of rebuttals on the role technology plays with the elderly, Helm (2005) maintains that the elderly do not receive optimum health care when telemedicine is deployed. Helm (2005) argues that elderly patients at times do not accept that a physician appearing on a screen can see and listen to them properly in other words depersonalization of the process has done no favours as far as the elderly are concerned.

The growth of aging societies and a rising prevalence of dementia are associated with increasing demand for care home places and technology (wearable location tracking devices, bed monitoring systems) are used in care homes to enhance safety and reduce staff burden however there are ethical issues on the invasion of privacy. Alex (2017) argues that as a result of surveillance and monitoring devices concerns such as loss of dignity, loss of patient autonomy and the potential of dehumanising person centred care need to be addressed.

Thirdly, it is argued that the delivery of technology has enhanced care delivery in care homes and has contributed in improving the health of elderly patients however some elderly people find technological devices user unfriendly and as a result withdraw from social activities because of social stigmatization and technical barriers (Lehoux 2004)

What is the impact of covid 19 on the elderly? Singletary (2020) suggests that the covid pandemic had an adverse effect on the elderly. The writer argues that agencies providing home delivered meals were worst hit since volunteer drivers were self isolating thereby creating a gap in the delivery service. As a result of the disruption in nutrition programs older adults with limited budgets had to depend on processed food which made it difficult to achieve adequate nutrition. The alterations in diet can lead to complications in those with underlying health conditions.

Graham (2020) maintains that support services focused on the elderly have been duly threatened with health care systems focusing mainly on managing covid 19 cases at the expense of other health care appointments being delayed and cancelled. This action has put older patients at a high risk of health deterioration. Graham (2020) further argues that the absence of medical care being readily available to older patients results in backlogs of needed surgeries, check ups and appointments which invariably strains the system and delays routine care.

Issues such as loneliness and social isolation have been linked to negative mental and physical health outcomes such as increased anxiety and depression symptoms. Older adults received stricter directives on social distancing, they were the first group admonished to stay home. The elderly who experienced long periods of isolation may experience health effects that outlast their time in quarantine. (Graham 2020)

Schumaker (2020) argues that the pandemic has shown engrained age stereotyping and ageism in the society. The writer asserts that actions and attitudes in response to covid 19 pandemic have been linked to reduce concerns to older people. Schumaker (2020) further argues that

countries were slow to respond because only old people were said to be at risk treatment was however was in place for youth and children.

In order to address the challenges and vulnerability associated with aging the government of the United Kingdom has supportive structures in place for the support of the elderly. The Equality Act (2010) protects from unfair treatment and discrimination on the basis of age, race etc however the Equality Act allows for age discrimination under reasonable grounds (Age.UK). There are however equality advisory and support services available to people who have experienced discrimination.

Another support available to the elderly is the charity called Age UK. The charity is focused on the elderly and seeks to provide services which range from volunteers who give befriending services, day services, IT training, social services amongst others. Age UK also undertakes campaigning and influencing to project policies that promote the wellbeing of disadvantaged elderly people (Age UK).

Finally the government of the United Kingdom has a number of benefits in place for people over state pension age. Age UK states that the elderly in the United Kingdom are eligible to heating benefits, public transport consensus, council tax support and housing benefit.

References

Alex, H., Chris, T., Condell, J., (2021)

Implementing monitoring technologies in care homes for people with dementia: A qualitative exploration using Normalization Process Theory

Centre for Ageing Better <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/how-are-older-people-adapting-digital-technology-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Chanda, B., Condell, J., Dora, S., Gibson, D., and Leavey, J. (2021) State-of-the-Art Sensors for Remote Care of People with Dementia during a Pandemic: A Systematic Review. *Sensors* **2021**, 21, 4688. <https://doi.org/10.3390/s21144688>

Graham, J. (2020, March 18). *Amid pandemic, programs struggle to reach vulnerable seniors living at home*. Kaiser Health News. Retrieved from: <https://khn.org/news/as-coronavirus-surges-programs-struggle-to-reach-vulnerable-seniors-living-at-home/> [Google Scholar]

Hjelm, J. (2005) Benefits and drawbacks of Telemedicine
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1258/1357633053499886>

Lehoux, P. (2002) Patients' perspectives on high-tech home care: a qualitative inquiry into the user-friendliness of four technologies. *BMC Health Serv Res* **4**, 28 (
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-4-28>

Nguyen, D., Le, D., Do, H., Duong, T., Thai D. and Tran, J (2014) "An efficient camera-based surveillance for fall detection of elderly people," *2014 9th IEEE Conference on Industrial Electronics and Applications*, researchgate.net/profile/Viet-Dung-Nguyen-

3/publication/286736804_An_efficient_camera-based_surveillance_for_fall_detection_of_elderly_people

Schumacher, I., Elliot, J. and Withigan, C. (2020) Suggestions for a Covid 19 Post Pandemic Research Agenda in Environmental Economics
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10640-020-00478-1>

Singletary, M. (2020). Investors may be scared, but they are holding tight. Many see recent stock market drops as a sign to buy, not sell. The Washington Post. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/04/13/investors-may-be-scared-they-are-holding-tight-many-see-recent-stock-market-drops-signal-buy-not-sell/> [Google Scholar]

Stirling,P. and Burgess, G (2020)How does the provision of advanced predictive telecare and smart home technology for older people affect its outcomes

