



UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David
London

Assessment 1 Supporting Paper

Student name: Sandra Johanna Jimenez Vergara
Student ID: 2024741
Module name: Living with care: The older person
Module code: BMHP6009
Lecturer name: Laila Surani
Date: 08 December 2023

Introduction

This debate aimed to analyze the negative aspects of the use of technology in older adults in the United Kingdom, both its possible risks and its important benefits. Concerns about social isolation, health risks and personal safety resonate on one front. At the same time, advocates highlight the beneficial role of technology, hailing it as a gateway to connectivity, cognitive stimulation, and critical assistance for aging populations. This argument attempts to uncover the complicated interplay of technology's impact on older people's well-being by navigating the delicate balance between negative impacts and transformative possibilities.

Standpoint on the debate

The incorporation of technology into the life of older people in the modern landscape of the United Kingdom has sparked a nuanced debate, investigating the contradictory dimensions of its impact. On the one side, there is growing worry about the negative consequences, such as social isolation, significant health problems, and personal security threats. Simultaneously, supporters claim that technology holds the key to unlocking an abundance of potential, ranging from improving connection and mental stimulation to providing critical support for ageing populations and carers. The debate over the negative impact of technology on elderly people dives into the issues created by rapid digitalization. As some elderly people cope with the complexity of modern technologies, a sense of alienation from the increasingly digitalized social world arises as a serious concern. The sedentary lifestyle promoted by prolonged device usage raises concerns about obesity and cardiovascular disease, while sleep disruptions caused by screen use add another layer of possible health problems. Furthermore, due to their lack of familiarity with digital security measures, older people are more vulnerable to internet fraud, identity theft, and privacy breaches.

Other views

In line with other views, the use of technology among the elderly in the United Kingdom demonstrates its important role in various aspects of modern life. Embracing digital tools is more than just an adaptation; it is a gateway to improved communication, healthcare, entertainment, and information access. Rather than being entirely critical, this viewpoint emphasises technology's positive impact on the elderly. Technological progress is portrayed as a stimulant for social contact, cognitive stimulation, and critical emergency assistance. The narrative presents a comprehensive picture by recognising technology as a helper rather than a barrier. The seamless integration of technology into the lives of older people is intended as a means to improve their general well-being and quality of life. Simultaneously, it acknowledges the critical role that technology plays in providing crucial support to carers, reducing tasks, and improving care efficiency. In essence, this viewpoint reframes the conversation around technology and ageing, emphasising its potential to be a revolutionary force that improves the lives of the old while also strengthening the caregiving ecosystem.

Reflexion in the main points discussed in the debate

The reflection delves into the impact of technology on older people, shedding light on the negative consequences while recognizing its potential positive influence. The focus on social isolation highlights the challenge faced by those struggling to adapt to today's technology, creating a digital divide that fosters feelings of alienation. The focus on social isolation highlights the challenge faced by those struggling to adapt to today's technology, creating a digital divide that fosters feelings of alienation(Freeman et al, 2021). The rapid pace of technological progress exacerbates this isolation, unintentionally deepening loneliness. The contradictory nature of technology, which simultaneously connects and isolates, is emphasized. The narrative extends to the paradoxical impact on health, as technology promotes sedentary lives despite its goals of connectivity, urging a mindful approach to overall well-being (Age UK, 2021).

Cognitive challenges in adapting to new technologies are highlighted, causing stress and frustration, while threats to cybersecurity contribute to anxiety and feelings of violation. The influx of information induces techno-stress and overwhelms older users. Overreliance on technology threatens independence and diminishes autonomy in daily tasks, raising questions about the delicate balance between benefits and risks. The social stigma associated with older people's use of technology is explored, addressing perceptions of inadequacy and reluctance to change, which perpetuate ageist attitudes (UCL, 2021).However, its proponents counter these concerns and claim that technology, when used wisely, can be a positive force (Schwaba and Bleidorn, 2020). Digital tools are presented as avenues for social engagement, cognitive stimulation and emergency help, and offer transformative potential for well-being and quality of life. As the debate develops, the imperative emerges for a balanced understanding, recognizing both the dangers and the potential benefits. The talk aims to explore the intricate relationship between technology and older people, seeking insights that inform a thoughtful and holistic approach to the changing landscape of technology in the lives of older people (Vaportzis, Giatsi Clausen and Gow, 2017).

Statistics on the ageing UK population

More than one-fifth of us are now over the age of 60, and the number of individuals over 60 is predicted to rise from 14.9 million in 2014 to 18.5 million in 2025 (ONS, 2015). In the UK, 75% of 75-year-olds have more than one long-term diseases, rising to 82% of 85-year-olds (Barnett et al, 2012). Between 2007/08 and 2013/14, the number of Accident and emergency visits by those aged 60 and up climbed by two-thirds, a greater increase than would be predicted from demographic change alone (NHS England data, 2015).

Support or services in place to support the UK elderly population

The government of the United Kingdom provides comprehensive assistance to the elderly, addressing numerous elements of their well-being. State pensions, which are defined by national insurance contributions, provide financial help to retirees. The National Health Service provides healthcare services, including pharmaceuticals, and the elderly may be eligible for free medications. Local government social care services include support with everyday activities as well as home or nursing care. requirements of the UK's senior population (NHS England, 2020).

Pension Credit helps low-income people, and Winter Fuel Payments help with heating bills. Attendance Allowance provides assistance to persons who require personal care due to illness. Carers receive Carer's Allowance if they are caring for someone who is receiving disability payments. Local governments provide a variety of services, such as housing assistance and community events. Pension Wise offers free advice on pension alternatives, while charities such as Age UK provide information on a variety of topics, supporting the holistic well-being of the elderly. This complex support system demonstrates the government's commitment to meeting the different different requirements of the UK's senior population (Cpa.org.uk, 2019).

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the older person and relevant services

The Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately harmed elderly people, emphasising technology's harmful influence on their life. Lockdowns and social distancing policies increased reliance on digital platforms for communication and services, worsening many elders' technology deficit. Access to in-person support services was limited, disrupting healthcare and worsening physical and mental health issues. The shift to virtual platforms stretched older people, increasing social isolation and feelings of loneliness. Furthermore, relying on technology for basic services presented difficulties for people who were unfamiliar with digital technologies. As society adapted to distant solutions, older people experienced impediments to vital services, emphasising the need for specialised support and bridging the technology divide to preserve the well-being of this vulnerable generation in the face of the ongoing pandemic (Public Health England, 2021).

References

Age UK (2021) '*Nearly two million over-75s in England are still digitally excluded in a COVID-19 world*', Available at: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2021/nearly-two-million-over-75s-in-england-are-still-digitally-excluded--in-a-covid-19-world/> (Accessed: 13 October 2023).

Cpa.org.uk. (2019). *Centre for Policy on Ageing - Policies on Ageing* -. Available at: http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/policies_on_ageing.html (Accessed: 03 November 2023).

Freeman, S. et al. (2020) '*Intergenerational Effects on the Impacts of Technology Use in Later Life: Insight from an International, Multi-Site Study*'. Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/16/5711> (Accessed: 13 October 2023).

NHS England (2020) '*Improving Care for Older People*', England.nhs.uk. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/older-people/improving-care-for-older-people/> (Accessed: 03 November 2023).

Office for National Statistics (2022). *Voices of our ageing population - Office for National Statistics*. [www.ons.gov.uk](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/voicesofourageingpopulation/livinglongerlives#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20England%20and). Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/voicesofourageingpopulation/livinglongerlives#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20England%20and> (Accessed: 03 November 2023).

Public Health England (2021) *COVID-19: wider impacts on people aged 65 and over*. GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-wider-impacts-on-people-aged-65-and-over> (Accessed: 05 November 2023).

Schwaba, T. and Bleidorn, W. (2020). Log on and Prosper? Little Evidence for Codevelopment Between Psychological Adjustment and Technology Use in Older Adulthood. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa073> (Accessed: 05 November 2023).

UCL (2021). *POLICY BRIEFING Older adults as victims of online financial crime Dawes centre for future crime at ucl 1 dawes centre for future crime AT UCL*. Available at:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/future-crime/sites/future_crime/files/ucl_policy_briefing_-_older_people_and_financial_crime_december21.pdf. (Accessed :05 November 2023).

Vaportzis, E., Giatsi Clausen, M. and Gow, A.J. (2017) 'Older adults perceptions of technology and barriers to interacting with tablet computers: A focus group study', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(1687), pp.1–11. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01687>. (Accessed: 24 October 2023).