

Special Issue

The Role of Social Technology in the Lives of Older People

Message from the Guest Editors

Social technology has become part of our daily lives and is an important means in communicating with our social contacts. In times of COVID-19 the role of social technology became even more prominent. Although older people do not use social technology as frequently and intensely as younger people do, research has shown that for older people social technology may strengthen, and enrich their existing social relationships. Remaining in contact with their relatives and caregivers also gives a sense of safety and peace of mind to the older people themselves as well as their network members. However, older people also experience barriers in the use of social technology. They struggle with passwords, Wi-Fi and ill-designed user interfaces. Also, some older people feel that social technology sometimes stands in the way of real human contact. With this special issue we explore how and under what circumstances social technology can help older people to fulfil their social needs. We aim to help researchers, designers of social technology and healthcare professionals by providing a better understanding of the role of social technology and effects it has in the lives of older people.

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Addressing the environmental and public health challenges requires engagement and collaboration among clinicians and public health researchers. Scientific discoveries and advances in this research field play a critical role in providing a rational basis for informed decision-making toward control and prevention of human diseases, especially the illnesses that are induced from environmental exposure to health hazards.

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