

Improving the quality of life for dependent elderly adults

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Can ICT improve the quality of life of elderly adults living in residential home care units?

Western populations are aging. As a result, there is an increase in elderly adults living in specialised institutions. A 'paradoxical side effect' of this is a feeling of solitude and isolation. Can information and computer technologies prevent this and work to improve the quality of life for

such adults? Research published in *Behaviour & Information Technology* suggests it can.

The study examines the psychological profiles of a group of [elderly adults](#) (with a mean age of 87) living in residential home care units (RHCUs). The residents were introduced to software comprising three different activities: leisure games, a journal editing tool and an intuitive emailing device. They were examined before the software use, during the introductory training stage and afterwards.

The authors of the study hypothesised that the 'social seclusion' that can arise from living in an RHCUs can be decreased through adjusting to a new technological environment, an environment that provides residents with new skills. Despite initial reluctance from the subjects of the study, the research suggests that elderly adults observed can both grasp a technological universe and use it to improve their quality of life. The study shows that on a personal level, technology increases both the self-esteem and self-confidence of the residents. More interestingly, perhaps, the experiment also prompted the individuals to play a greater role in social activities where they helped and supported one another.

More information: Marc-Eric Bobillier Chaumon, et al. "Can ICT improve the quality of life of elderly adults living in residential home care units? From actual impacts to hidden artefacts." *Behaviour & Information Technology*, Volume 33, Issue 6, 2014. [DOI: 10.1080/0144929X.2013.832382](#)

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