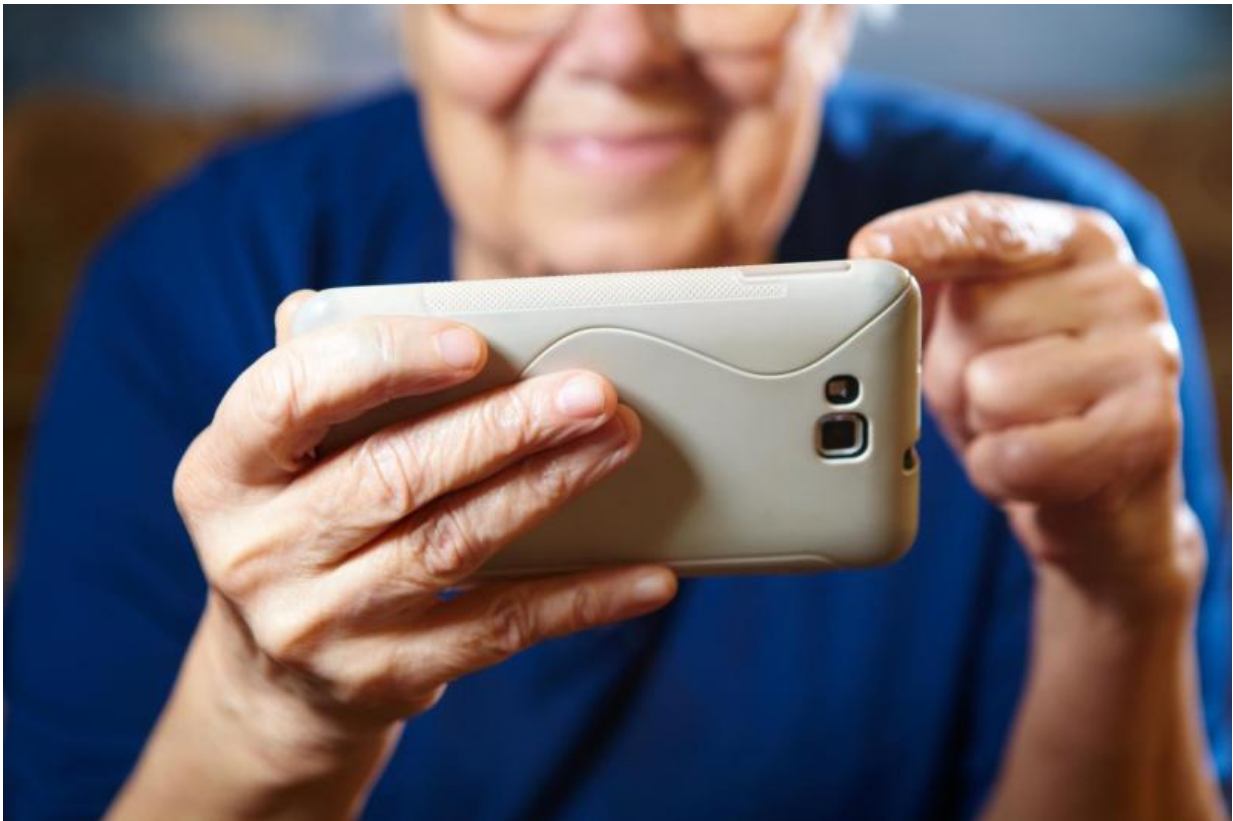


# Social Internet-based activities important for healthy ageing

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A steadily increasing amount of everyday activities require access to the Internet, and to achieve increased participation in society, we need to pay attention to an increased inclusion of seniors according to study at Umeå University. Credit: Mostphotos

Meaningful and Internet-based activities promote experiences of

participation in society and are important for healthy ageing. In a new dissertation at Umeå University in Sweden, occupational therapists are shown to promote participation, reduce experiences of loneliness and strengthen seniors' social network using an Internet-based intervention programme.

"Digitalisation is increasing the risk of excluding [seniors](#) who often can have limited experiences of Internet-based activities," says Ellinor Larsson, doctoral student at the Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation.

"A steadily increasing amount of everyday activities require access to the Internet, and to achieve increased participation in society, we need to pay attention to an increased inclusion of seniors. The senior citizen can also experience social change at the loss of loved ones, which makes the loneliness more evident. A joint effort focusing on how the well-being of the elderly can be promoted through meaningful Internet-based activities, is becoming more important in order to support the ageing population of today's society."

In her dissertation, which covers interviews and an evaluation of an Internet-based intervention programme, Ellinor Larsson describes how health-promoting efforts aimed at the seniors can be developed. To enable Internet-based social interventions for seniors, a collaboration between several parties in society is needed.

One of the studies showed that seniors who performed daily activities online also sensed a satisfying participation in society. According to the study, the participation in Internet-based activities can be promoted through support and encouragement from people in the person's surroundings, through greater access to technology and by identifying what online activities that are meaningful and important in the senior's everyday life.

The dissertation also shows how an individual and Internet-based occupational therapy intervention was drawn up to support the seniors in the introduction to social Internet-based activities. In an evaluation of the intervention, the participants showed a significant reduction in loneliness. A follow-up study shows that the online social activities constituted a compliment to other social activities and contacts both online and offline.

Provided by Umea University

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