

Increased independence and integrity with an intelligent shower

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Credit: Karlstad University

The feeling of being more independent. More time to support and encourage the residents to manage on their own. These are some reflections from residents and staff at Resurscentrum in Karlstad Municipality, who tested a so called intelligent shower for one year.

Researchers at CTF, Service Research Center at Karlstad University, have studied their experiences and what value is added from the new technology.

The study focused on the value of using an intelligent shower, designed to help elderly and persons with reduced mobility to be able to shower by themselves. Both residents and staff are pleased with the new shower solution.

"Residents, who previously have been completely dependent on staff, experience that they control their own shower situation to a greater extent, and that the staff is mainly there as [support](#). Although most residents are accustomed to and dependent of care, they strive to become more independent. The intelligent shower allows for a feeling of increased control and can counteract so called learned helplessness, which means that the feeling of uncontrollability can make you feel like you are losing abilities which you actually master, and in the long run can lead to reduced wellbeing", says Charlotte Bäckman, Assistant professor in Psychology at CTF.

In addition to an improved work situation with, among other things, reduced risk of injury, the staff see the greatest value in being able to focus on helping the residents become more independent. This in turn can have positive effects also in other situations and can lead to increased wellbeing. Another conclusion from the study is that the municipality should review the shower situation, mainly at home, to prevent learned helplessness.

The purpose of the study was also to create an increased understanding of how different users experience the introduction of assistive [technology](#).

"It is not possible to understand and implement assistive technology in

one way, even if the purpose of the new technology is the same. The resistance towards technology may be greater in some situations than others, and the value of using technical solutions may vary depending on the situation. In this case, one can imagine that the shower solution, which aims to support the user in an intimate situation, has a greater value than [social contact](#) for the residents," says Linda Bergkvist, Assistant professor in Informatics at CTF.

The study was conducted through questionnaires and interviews with residents and [staff](#) at the Resurscentrum at Karlstad municipality both before and after using the intelligent shower solution. The project is co-financed by CTF and Karlstad municipality and with the support of the Interreg project SOL- Support Quality of Life. The intelligent [shower](#) is developed by Robotics Care AB.

Provided by Karlstad University

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