

New report finds artificial intelligence fuels ageism in geriatric care

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A world-first Monash University study has found using artificial intelligence in aged care homes can exacerbate ageism and social inequality.

The paper, published in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, reveals the unmet value of [artificial intelligence](#) (AI) to help solve [aged care](#) issues including loneliness of residents through chat, video and image sharing, and even providing medical diagnoses and assessments tools.

The study found pushing AI technology—from robots to voice assistants—into aged care can exacerbate ageist views due to the choices made by caregivers on how best to use technology for [older people](#) in these settings.

"AI can perpetuate ageism and exacerbate existing [social inequalities](#)," lead author Dr. Barbara Barbosa Neves said. "When implementing AI technologies in aged care, we must consider them as part of a suite of care services and not as isolated solutions."

The study reveals more work is needed to better incorporate how older people are viewed in the design and implementation of AI technologies. The findings show ageism can be generated by design, which includes views about older people as dependent, incompetent, and disinterested in technology, rather than engaged.

The study also shows that both AI developers and aged care staff assume a lack of interest and/or capacity of older people to use the technology. This largely overshadows the need for accessibility and nondiscrimination.

There is therefore a need to change stereotypes about aged care residents, and attitudes of staff, and create technologies that are designed for, and inclusive of, older people.

"The use of AI in aged care must be done with consideration of the potential impact of these technologies on well-being, autonomy, and dignity of older residents," Dr. Neves said.

This comes after the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#), which emphasized the need to put the autonomy and dignity of older people in care at the center.

More information: Barbara Barbosa Neves et al, Artificial Intelligence in Long-Term Care: Technological Promise, Aging Anxieties, and Sociotechnical Ageism, *Journal of Applied Gerontology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1177/07334648231157370](https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648231157370)

Provided by Monash University

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