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USABILITY TESTS WITH PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM DEMENTIA REGARDING SMARTPHONES, SMARTWATCHES AND TABLETS

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Statement of the Problem: The difficulties people with dementia face regarding the usage of new technologies like smartphones, smartwatches or tablets are well-known. However, these new technologies are appropriate for the usage in nursing homes, when the usability is flawless and user-friendly. In this context, it is important to have verified methods to test the usability of mobile devices. Surveying the usability of mobile devices, it is important to figure out how to improve the acceptance of those systems for people with dementia. Regarding the usability of assistive technologies for people with dementia there is a need of high quality research.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: An exploratory mixed method research approach to gain knowledge on the use and handling of a communication platform (via smartphones, tablets) as well as a smart watch by people in need of care (n=10) and people suffering from dementia (n=10) living in two German nursing homes was used. Therefore, a combination of qualitative interviews/conversations, qualitative observation as well as the quantitative System Usability Scale questionnaire was conducted.

Findings: The majority of people suffering from dementia has no or few experiences with technologies. Many residents swiped correctly from the very beginning or had minor difficulties. Overall, residents had no or minor problems seeing pictures/videos and hearing when having phone calls/video calls. Residents were strongly interested in the album module, video phoning as well as phone calls via a smartwatch. On average, the score of residents living at Pflegezentrum Techau is 67,91 the score of residents living at Gotthard-und-Anna-Hansen-Stift is 45,62.

Conclusion & Significance: Further research should take into account to use tablets rather than smartphones due to the benefits of a larger screen. Moreover, good instructions especially at the beginning of introducing new technologies are very important. Further usability tests are needed to get representative results.

Biography

Julia Riesch has done BSc in Health Promotion and MSc in Public Health from Fulda University of Applied Sciences. Since 2015, she works as a research assistant at Flensburg University of Applied Sciences. Her research focuses on eHealth in the Baltic Sea Region as well as dementia and innovative technologies in nursing homes. Within the project Demantec she conducted qualitative empirical research by carrying out interviews and observations with care staff working in nursing homes, residents of nursing homes suffering from dementia as well as their relatives.

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