

Publication

Digital health interventions for healthy ageing: a qualitative user evaluation and ethical assessment

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Background: Digital health technologies are being increasingly developed with the aim of allowing older adults to maintain functional independence throughout the old age, a process known as healthy ageing. Such digital health technologies for healthy ageing are expected to mitigate the socio-economic effects of population ageing and improve the quality of life of older people. However, little is known regarding the views and needs of older people regarding these technologies. Aim: The aim of this study was to explore the views, needs and perceptions of community-dwelling older adults regarding the use of digital health technologies for healthy ageing. Method: Face-to-face, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with community-dwelling older adults (median age 79.6 years). The interview process involved both abstract reflections and practical demonstrations. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed according to inductive content analysis. Results: Three main themes and twelve sub-themes addressing our study aim resulted from the data obtained. The main themes revolved around favorable views and perceptions on technology-assisted living, usability evaluations and ethical considerations. Conclusions: Our study reveals a generally positive attitude towards digital health technologies as participants believed digital tools could positively contribute to improving their overall wellbeing, especially if designed in a patient-centered manner. Safety concerns and ethical issues related to privacy, empowerment and lack of human contact were also addressed by participants as key considerations.

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