

Presidential symposium

Celebrating the contributions of James Leonard Fozard, Grand Master of Gerontechnology, on his 80th birthday

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Participants

A. Franco (France), H. Bouma (Netherlands), Wang Kuo Ming (Taiwan), D.G. Bouwhuis (Netherlands), J.E.M.H. van Bronswijk (Netherlands), N. Charness (USA), A. Sixsmith (Canada), president of the conference, J.J. van der Plaats (Netherlands), W.D Kearns (USA), C.H. Fozard, and J.L. Fozard (USA).

ISSUE

Jim Fozard's career in gerontology and gerontechnology spans six decades. He chose as his motto a quotation of M.P. Lawton (1923-2001) on fun and functionality in gerontechnology. His yearly citation score in Web-of-Science has seen a steady increase since his 60th birthday and has been at the 200+/year level for most of the 21st century (*Figure 1*). He slowly shifted from gerontology to gerontechnology. This symposium will show the impact of his work on current and future gerontechnology generations.

CONTENT

Researchers will present new results related to Jim Fozard's work. Don Bouwhuis: Many different display technologies have been designed to present visible messages and information. Though most display products feature an adequate image quality, the images often fall short of optimality. Much graphical design handicaps the aging visual system. Neil Charness: The type of computer used

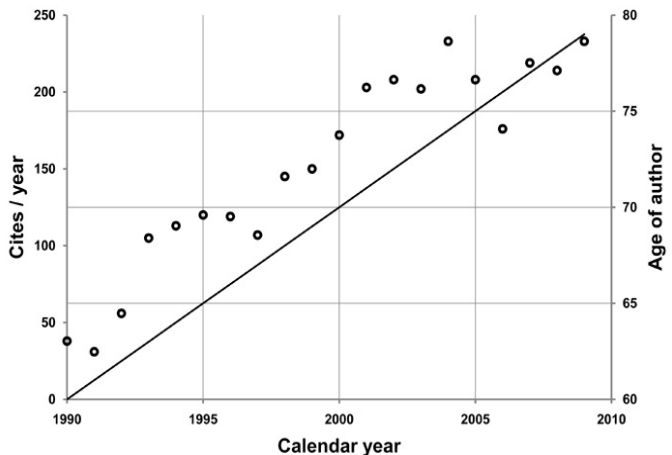


Figure 1. Cites/year of publications of James L. Fozard in Thompson-Reuters ISI Web-of-Knowledge (circles) in relation to the age of the author (solid line), over the last 20 years; Calculated from the ResearcherID module as of February 10, 2010

(desktop versus laptop) has impact on the probability of reporting arm/shoulder or wrist pain in a sample of older and younger workers. Are the postures adopted at office workstations different than those for home workstations? Which advice should be given? Andrew Sixsmith: Music is a valued and important component of everyday life for people with moderate or severe cognitive impairments. An iterative, user-driven approach was adopted to develop a music-player. Rather than usability issues, the most important factors influencing device use were the complex social processes that occur within communal settings. Anneke van der Plaats: If we want demented persons to handle an apparatus, the machine has to look and work in an old fashioned way, for instance, like an old radio, with a volume knob on the left and a selector knob on the right. The goal of gerontechnology in dementia is not merely instrumental. It implies the elimination of useless and chaotic arousal in the brain, and the provision of incentives that combat boredom or overstimulation. Bill Kearns: Real-time or even near real-time longitudinal monitoring and assessment technologies can track conditions preceding a fall. A system that relies on miniature transponders and fractal mathematics is used to determine the tortuosity of elders' paths as they traverse open areas. Inter-day path variability seems associated with falls likelihood.

STRUCTURE

After the convener's introduction, Herman Bouma will stress Jim's educator role, especially in case of PhD candidates who he ushered quietly to a more focussed and effective view on their work. Colette H. Fozard explicates a daughter's viewpoint. The impact of Fozard's work is the subject of Annelies van Bronswijk's talk, while Wang Kuo Ming, president of Nantai Technical University will reflect on Jim's recent work in Taiwan and present him with a special issue of Gerontechnology¹. The session will be closed by Jim Fozard himself.

CONCLUSION

James Leonard Fozard has become a grandmaster in gerontechnology, and may be considered as one of its founders.

Reference

1. James Leonard Fozard, Grandmaster of Gerontechnology for his 80th birthday. Gerontechnology 2010;9(3); doi:10.4017/gt.2010.09.03.000.00