

A. O'HANLON, R. BOND, B. KNAPP, L. CARRAGHER. *The Nestling Project: Attitudes towards technology and associations with health, relationships and quality of life. Gerontechnology 2010;9(2):236; doi:10.4017/gt.2010.09.02.271.00* **Purpose** Although technology can enhance well-being and enable people to remain at home as they grow older, little is known about older adults' attitudes and experiences towards new and standard technologies. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an information systems theory that suggests attitudes towards technology are predicted by the usefulness of given technology and its perceived ease-of-use (PEOU)^{1,2}. This study developed and tested an extended technology acceptance model with consideration for other psychological and social factors found in the medical and health literature. **Method** Mid-life and older community based adults (50+ years) were recruited door-to-door within the natural boundaries of a large town in the north east of Ireland. Participants were given a list of ICT, entertainment and safety technologies, and asked to indicate the extent, if any, they were using these technologies (not at all - daily), and the approximate year of initial use. If a given technology was not used, participants were asked if they were interested in using or learning to use it. All participants were asked to indicate the actual or perceived usefulness of each technology, and how difficult it was / might be to use. Additional measures assessed general attitudes to technology, psychological well-being, social connectedness, and physical health. Participants completed surveys in their own homes typically with a trained interviewer. Descriptive, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Multivariate analyses were used to explain attitudes to technology based on the extended technology acceptance model. **Results & Discussion** Participants generally enjoyed technologies and were comfortable and confident about their use. Greater variability in attitudes and behaviour was evident for some technologies such as computers. Greater use of technology was associated with higher levels of social connectedness, improved health and more positive quality of life. Variance in attitudes towards technology was explained by perceptions of usefulness, control and ease-of-use, however the fit of the model improved with the addition of further psychological and social variables including the attitudes of significant others towards technology use. Older people do enjoy technology, and its use can improve health and well-being. The Extended Technology Acceptance Model, which includes additional psychological and social dimensions of experience, provides a useful framework for understanding attitudes towards technology and technology behaviors and uptake.

References

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