

A. O'HANLON, R. BOND, L. CARRAGHER. *The Louth Age-Friendly Community Survey: Attitudes towards technology and associations with indicators of age friendliness. Gerontechnology 2010;9(2):237; doi:10.4017/gt.2010.09.02.272.00* **Purpose** Ongoing ageing of the population will directly impact on living environments in cities and communities in every region of the world. The World Health Organization (WHO)¹ used a set protocol to obtain and collate data on age-friendly barriers and opportunities in 35 cities throughout the world, including Dundalk, Ireland. This study had two aims: (i) to build on the WHO report by developing a scale to measure levels of age-friendliness; (ii) to examine the relationships between age-friendliness and use / attitudes to ICT, entertainment and safety technologies². **Method** Possible items for the Louth Age-Friendliness Measure (LAFM) were developed from the WHO report, from focus groups with older people and from a review of literature within eight areas: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; respect and social inclusion; communication and information; civic participation and employment; and, community support and health services. Following piloting, a large county-wide survey was undertaken to validate and test the psychometric properties of the scales further (n=1000+). Participants completed surveys in their own homes with a trained interviewer. Descriptive, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model. **Results & Discussion** Results to date indicate diversity in technology use and attitudes. Participants who use technology report feeling more informed and are more likely to be score higher (more positively) on many WHO themes including communication and information, social participation, transportation, and community support and health services. Participants were enthusiastic about hand-held devices with widgets specific to their interests and lives, such as weather charts, or feeds about events in their areas. The WHO report offers a useful framework for understanding technology use and its impact on the lives and relationships of community-based mid-life and older adults.

References

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Address: Netwell Centre, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dundalk, Ireland;

E: ann.ohanlon@dkit.ie