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Purpose The use of technology potentially allows seniors to deal more easily with the difficulties imposed by modern life, helping to limit their social and emotional isolation, and helping them achieve a more participative and better quality of life. With changes due to globalization, seniors feel the need to adapt to a new modern life, but they usually face many difficulties. In addition to the complexity of each new technology, there may be additional difficulties associated with demographic characteristics such as income, education level, geographical location, and possible disabilities¹. In Brazil, a growing number of seniors look for educational and practical courses on computer use or how to use other daily technologies (i.e. cell-phones, remote controls). This study aimed to analyze the acceptance of daily life technologies, to identify any fears about the use of these devices and if this influences how they are used.

Method The sample consisted of 42 active elderly people from different locations in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, with an average age of 69 years and of both genders. This is a descriptive, transversal and qualitative study, approved by the Ethical Research Committee, carried out between August and December 2011. The procedures for data collection included: (i) a socio-economic questionnaire, (ii) an evaluation of functional capacity in the use of Instrumental Activities of Daily Living - IADL, (iii) a questionnaire with open-closed questions about the fear of the new technologies, and (iv) a scale of acceptability of technologies (the scale evaluates the positive and negative reactions to the use of new different technology devices and their usefulness in everyday life). A descriptive, qualitative analysis was used for data analysis.

Results & Discussion In relation to social class, 31% belong to the upper class and upper-middle class, 47,6% to middle class, 12% belong to the lower social class and 9.4% did not respond or didn't know how to respond. Regarding education, 2.4% of the sample had a master's or doctoral degree; 28.5% have completed higher education; 19.1% completed high school; 23,9% completed elementary school education; and 26.1% had incomplete basic education. Regarding fear of using new technologies, 40.5% of elderly reported fear of using it; 54.8% reported no fear; and 4.7% did not respond or didn't know how to respond. The majority (90.47%) showed interest in learning how to use technology. According to these results and confirmed by the literature, there is apprehension about the use of technological devices, but there is also interest in learning how to use them². The difficulties reported were: insecurity in the use of new technologies, such as: learning difficulties due to age, lack of knowledge about the functions of the devices, a fear of damaging the equipment, or just disliking technology or being uninterested. Regarding the acceptability, all subjects reported accepting new technologies and recognized its importance. Benefits to everyday life was the most significant factor. It may be noted that despite the apprehension felt by a significant number of elderly, they are in favour of including these technologies into their routine. According to Roupa et al.¹, the acceptance and consequent use of the technology by the elderly population significantly contributes to a better quality of life, improving parameters of daily living such as transportation facilitation, communication, and participation in social life. By understanding the importance and necessity to enter in the digital and technology era, the elderly can overcome their fear and are look for participating in technologies classes to provide socialization and better quality of life.

References

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