C. Silva Santana , V. Meirelles Carril Elui, P. Mazzoncini de Azevedo Marques. **Elderly instrumentation for everyday use of electronic equipment.** *Gerontechnology 2012; 11(2):199;* doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.594.00 **Purpose** Population ageing has required the development of new occupational roles, especially for active seniors looking forward to developing future life plans and following technological changes that have been occurring at great speed. Digital inclusion increases the power of the elderly with regard to choice and decision-making, concerning shopping and evaluation of products suited to their use. It also facilitates the way seniors approach what has been developed today; establishing a greater connection to what is contemporary. The aim of this paper is to describe training of the elderly to use electronic equipment in everyday life. **Method** This is an intervention developed in the Digital Inclusion Project for the Elderly (ICDS) in the period from August 2010 to December 2011. The program included theoretical and practical classes of 90 minutes, which happened once a week during a period of two months at the University of Sao Paulo, attended by about 400 active seniors, aged between 60 and 85 years, with different educational backgrounds. The working group was formed by a teacher, students, and scholars of the program of Occupational Therapy and Biomedical Informatics. The objectives and nature of activities of the ICDS-project were to develop instrumentation for the elderly to use electronic devices, such as cell phones, TV and DVD remote controls, cameras and camcorders, lamps and health care devices, among others. The activities consisted of lectures and practical classes developed with multimedia devices and real devices. Individual time for questions and support materials such as brochures and leaflets were also offered. Participants attended the classes by spontaneous demand. Information on the socio-economic characteristics, on the devices that they use more often, and on the difficulties they have concerning the use of them, were collected by a questionnaire. After the intervention period there was an assessment of their learning and of the changes in daily life from what was learned in ICDS. The team met weekly to discuss and evaluate the work done. **Results & Discussion** Given the difficulties that the elderly experience in using new technologies, the project sought to improve their skills and abilities, bringing autonomy and independence both for those who live alone and for those who live with their families. Through intergenerational contact between the monitors and the elderly, it was possible to exchange experiences, learn of their difficulties, and also develop actions that could make them more independent in using these technologies. The elderly evaluated the digital-inclusion intervention in a positive way, reporting greater independence in the use of electronic equipment and increasing their acceptability for everyday use. We observed that greater independence in the use of electronic devices increased the interest in acquiring equipment available on the market and demanded a critical choice of the elderly in relation to ergonomics and suitability of the device to be purchased. We conclude that mastering the use of electronic devices requires frequent use and support material, such as manuals, with appropriate letters and in the form of a tutorial that are different from manuals that currently often accompany this kind of equipment. It also requires the elderly to take an interest, to be curious, and to master their fear of using or damaging these devices. We evaluated this project as having great social relevance, since this kind of teaching is rarely performed by family members or people that sell the equipment to the elderly.
Keywords: aging, occupational roles, digital inclusion, eletronic equipments
Affiliation: University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil; *E:* carla.santana@fmrp.usp.br
Full paper: No