

L. STENBERG, K. PESOLA, J. PEHKONEN. *Participation of older senior citizens in the information society*. *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):201; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.278.00 **Purpose** Finland is one of the fastest ageing societies¹ in Europe and therefore a lot of effort is put into finding new ways to provide services for the elderly. Finland is also one of Europe's leading countries in the use of information technology^{2,3}. The aim of this study was to find out the extent to which Finns in the 75- to 89-age range have access to computer and internet (mobile phones and safety telephones were also included in the study). The study also wanted to find out how the use of these technologies influences, for example, the experienced degree of participation and how it correlates with the size of the social network of this age group. The purpose of the study was also to find out the implications of possible non-participation⁴. **Method** Data was gathered by interviewing 800 persons aged 75 to 89 years, living in their own home, nationwide in Finland. The randomized sample was taken from the population register. The interviews took place in July 2011 and were conducted over the telephone. On average each interview lasted 15 minutes⁴. **Results & Discussion** The results of the study show that today most persons between the ages of 75 and 89 in Finland are not active members of the information society. Only 19% of this age group have access to internet and 11% have neither a mobile phone nor a computer⁴. The study furthermore shows that access to the internet correlates not only with age but also with socio-economic rank and the size of the user's social network. This is alarming, since more and more public services and information is offered through the internet. From the viewpoint of research and development it is easy to observe that a lot of work is carried out developing internet-based technological solutions for this age group. This research and development should be based on the real usage of these technologies by of the target population. In the future it will be important to take note of the limited internet usage of the older population and to find new ways to improve internet access. This will require not only better and more easy-to-use interfaces but also more public places (libraries, senior centres, etc.) where senior citizens have access to the services of the information society. More emphasis should also be put on education schemes on this topic for this age group.

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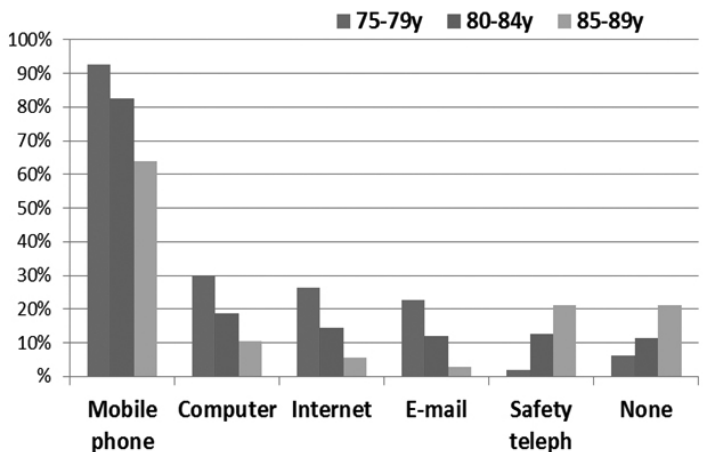


Figure 1. The access to mobile phones, computers, internet, e-mail and safety telephones in the Finnish population in the age group 75-89 years