

V.M.S. FERNANDES, J.P. MARUJO, T.S. TUPHOLME. **Geronto-design of skirting boards.** *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):348; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.515.00 **Purpose** To create a wooden skirting board that ensures a more active surveillance of the elderly, as well as the prevention of wheelchair accidents. Essentially this is an innovative tool that stimulates the visual, auditory, and tactile senses of dementia patients providing cognitive stimulation that will delay the progression of dementia. By means of a light device in the Snoezelen-system which is built into the skirting board, brain stimulation is achieved, improving the elderly person's attention span, memory, mood, verbal skills, and concentration and helping them to relax, ultimately providing the elderly person with a means to cope with challenges of daily life². **Method** The skirting board's position and measurements have been carefully designed to prevent accidents, to allow for the installation of the technology and for easier access by the user. This skirting board has a width of 15cm and a height of 20-30 cm; and has been placed above the ankle line (8-12cm above ground level). These specific measurements facilitate the user's movement without the wheelchair's hand rims touching the wall, thus preventing damage to the walls and simultaneously avoiding possible injury to the user's hands. In addition to protecting the wheelchair user, these specific skirting board measurements have been designed to accommodate all the installed technology; the Snoezelen-system, CD-Player, video camera, microphone and motion detectors (*Figure 1*).

Results & Discussion Formal health caretakers tested the prototype and reported improvement in the elderly person's responses to daily life challenges and an enhanced level of their well-being and will to live. This equipment may be fully or partially controlled by the elderly person, depending on his/her psychomotor status and may be placed in any type of housing for the elderly or in private homes.

References

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YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yX7ngUbVSbo>

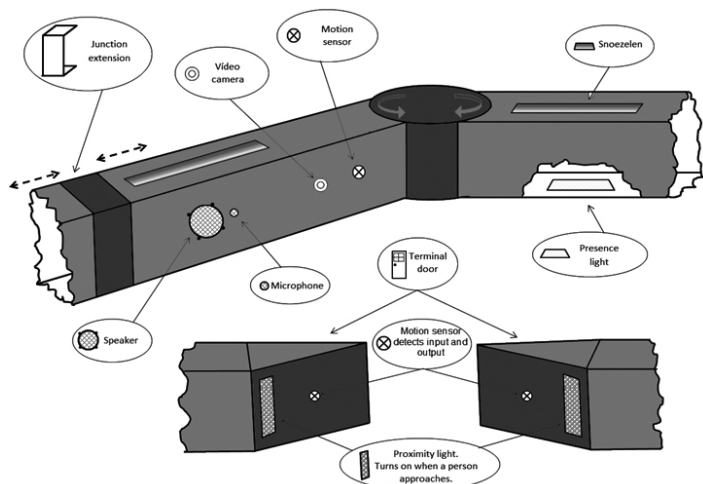


Figure 1: Smart skirting board and its equipment: Video camera at ground level, preserving privacy; Intercommunication for voice contact; Motion sensors inside the space; Detection sensors to detect if the user leaves the space (warns caregiver through light or sound); Automatic proximity light to the door; night light; emergency light; charging point for mobile phone; surround sound system; Snoezelen-system for cognitive stimulation/relaxation