

C.E. GRAMMER, W.T. D'SILVA, C. GARDNER, L. CANLAS. **Engaging isolated seniors and reducing caregiver burden.** *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):407; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.784.00 **Purpose** The purpose of this project is to demonstrate the market viability of Mon Ami™ technology to support and maintain the elderly population living independently in the community, ensuring both social engagement and security for the individual and their family caregivers. It should also improve job performance and increase effective contact with seniors in a healthcare setting. It may provide a cost-effective tool to close the gap between what is provided formally, and what seniors and family caregivers require. Measuring the relationship between the user and the care unit presents as an essential issue in both preference towards the care unit and purchase. **Method** We used an anti-oppressive, structuralist approach with a parallel (QUAN+QUAL and QUAL+QUAN) equivalent status design¹. Themes will emerge from the data collected rather than a priori. From CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors, a municipally funded seniors' support service) 14 independently living participants were recruited, aged 60-95, and were engaged over a three-month period. Recruitment, training and implementation of the Mon Ami™ service was monitored and assessed by four student research assistants from Seneca College using structured quantitative forms and reflective qualitative interviews with open-ended questions focused on: ease of use of the technology for seniors, feedback from users to improve the unit's overall system and function, and the optimum target market for sales of this product. Due to the limits of project time and funding, no internal validity could be established; however, a standard Quality of Life form was used as the baseline and terminal measure which had internal validity within the form itself. **Results & Discussion** The Mon Ami™ technology may reduce the caregiver burden for seniors from 66 to 70 years old (Figure 1). Seniors (i) build relationships in an effort to maintain meaning of life, and to stabilize an ever-changing personal world, (ii) are naturally curious about the world and enthusiastic about the process of learning new things, and (iii) want to be connecting to the social world in a meaningful and purposeful way. The company needs to hire additional skilled employees in marketing and distribution and social service worker with gerontological expertise to provide training for seniors, and engage community funding partners such as the LHINs (Local Health Integration Network) in subsidizing and purchasing these units for low-income seniors.

References

1. Tashakkori, A and Teddlie, C (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Thousand Oaks: Sage

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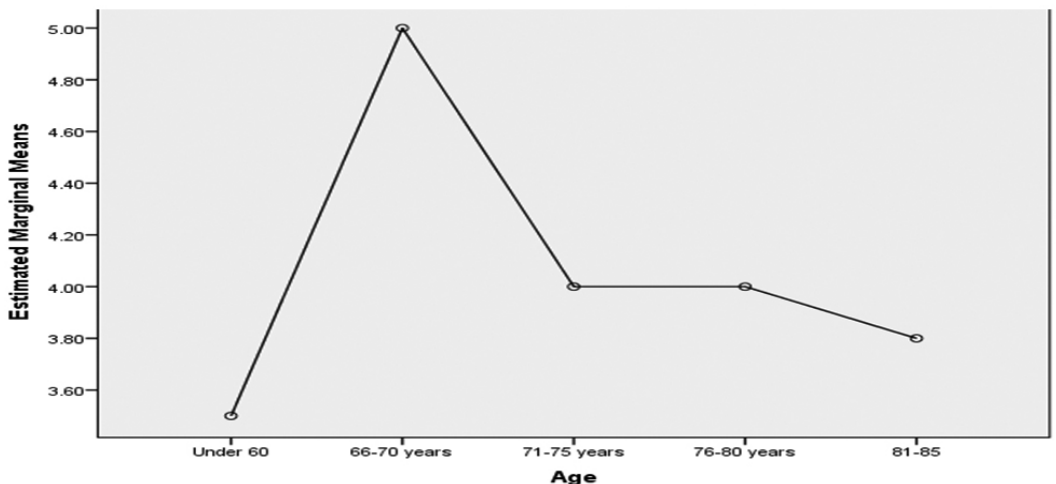


Figure 1. Estimated marginal means of overall satisfaction with Mon Ami™ for different age classes; $F=5.74$, $p=0.19$