

Importance of gerontechnology use for elderly Turkish people

S. OĞLAK, İ. TUFAN, A. CANATAN. **Importance of gerontechnology use for elderly Turkish people.** *Gerontechnology* 2014;13(2):268; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.421.00 **Purpose** Turkey's population is young, with only 6.6% of the population estimated at ages 65 years and older in 2013. However, the ageing population is growing rapidly, and Turkey is facing an aging population structure during the next decade. In this context, the majority of Turkey's elderly population will inevitably face significant health and social care needs in the future. Socio-economic and psychological issues such as loneliness, participation in society, maintaining quality of life and active aging, have become very important agendas with the increasingly elderly population. However, the formal and informal care workforce is insufficient. Moreover, a safe home environment will also be needed to provide access to health and social services such as assisted living facilities; this will enhance the quality of life and the participation of individuals in society. The need for technological devices that enable the elderly to provide for their own needs is very obvious. This paper describes a project using assisted living technology provided through local governments as well as by public and non-government organizations and also describes how to put this type of technology into practice. The purpose of the project is to address the challenges elderly people will confront and to meet the needs and demands of an aging population in Turkey. **Method** In this study, we conducted face-to-face interviews with fifteen local government officials as well as with leaders of public and non-governmental organizations and managers who provide services in this project. Semi-structured interview techniques were used to analyze gerontechnological methods in Ankara, Antalya and İstanbul. We analyzed the perceived importance, acceptance, and difficulties in using gerontechnological products and services for older adults in Turkey. **Results & Discussion** Gerontechnology is seen as a key solution for those who are faced with confronting the prospect of increasing demands for eldercare. The growing use of technology is facilitating access to health services in a way that enhances the quality of life for the elderly. Based on the results of this study, Turkish elderly people find gerontechnology readily acceptable, but social and economic access are crucial issues. The government must develop policies designed to provide affordable quality services, especially long-term care, for elderly people. Coordination and co-operation is needed between the various health and social care sectors. In conclusion, Turkey's population of elderly increasingly demand the use of technology. The elderly will benefit directly from technology but also face crucial challenges related to economic, social and cultural factors.

Keywords: housing & daily activities, Turkish elderly, gerontechnology use, quality of life

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