

H. KÜNEMUND, J. HAHMANN. **Social inequality and falls: Correlation and consequences for gerontechnology.** *Gerontechnology* 2016;15(suppl):42s; doi:10.4017/gt.2016.15.s.876.00 **Purpose** The interplay of social inequalities and health as well as potential causal factors are quite well researched. A correlation of falls and risk of falls with socio-economic status is less well documented as representative data is scarce. If we assume primarily external causes or random accidents, inequalities may be less relevant, but having, just to name some examples, barrier free dwellings or disabilities is also correlated with income, education and social status. And newest technologies typically require competencies and resources which are also correlated with socio-economic status. Do we have to conclude that gerontechnology exacerbates existing social inequalities? **Method** We analysed the acceptance of falls prevention technologies, risk of falls and falls by age group using a representative survey of the population aged 50+ living in private households in Lower Saxony (n=2,032, 49% female)¹, and the correlation with education and income in more detail based on a total population survey of the population aged 69-71 in Vechta community (n=1,819; 50% female)². **Results & Discussion** It is shown that both falls and risk of falls are correlated with education and income (*Figure 1* as an example). The nonlinearity in the case of falls is interpreted as a selection effect, e.g. a higher risk of institutionalization (or mortality) in the lower income groups. We conclude that the development of gerontechnology should take into account the problems, competencies, and resources of different social strata in order to not unintentionally aggravate existing social inequalities. We recommend the usage of qualitative methods of problem evaluation procedures to further develop the enormous potential of gerontechnology.

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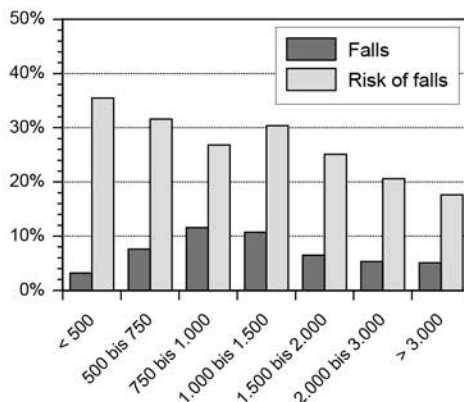


Figure 1: Falls and risk of falls by household income (in Euro) among 69-71 year-olds in Vechta, Germany, n=1,819