

S. AARTS. **Social media usage and wellbeing; what's the deal? A qualitative study among community-dwelling older adults.** *Gerontechnology* 2016;15(suppl):143s; doi:10.4017/gt.2016.15.s.577.00

**Purpose** It has been argued that the use of social media can aid in improving wellbeing in older adults, by decreasing levels of loneliness and improving the quality of life<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this study was to examine the ideas, opinions and feelings of older adults regarding the social media they use. **Method** Qualitative research with semi-structured interviews. The study population included 9 (2015; 7 women, 2 men) en 13 (2016; 10 women, 3 men) community-dwelling older adults aged 60 and over residing in the Netherlands. Only persons who used social media were included. Besides asking questions regarding/why/for what purpose social media is used, the following topics were discussed: attitudes regarding social media, feelings related to social media usage, social media usage and wellbeing. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed by open and axial coding. Participants received an information letter and provided written informed consent. **Results & Discussion** Applications such as Facebook Facetime and Whatsapp were mentioned. The first results (n=9) indicate that older adults highly appreciate social media. Social media is used to talk to people abroad, but also to, for example, make appointments and arrange meetings with people who are living 'next door'. However, "Social media is impersonal" is mentioned as an important drawback to be active on social media (e.g., to post pictures). Hence, although older adults perceive social media as positive, the majority of older adults do not prefer it over and above face-to-face contact. Privacy and 'being impersonal' are mentioned as main drawbacks to use social media.

#### References

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