

## POSTER

### Health and Self-Esteem

C.S. SANTANA, M.M.C. BIANCHI. *Sense of safety by older adults living alone using a personal alarm system. Gerontechnology 2018;17(Suppl):174s; <https://doi.org/10.4017/gt.2018.17.s.169.00>* **Purpose** Security is a major concern of older people living alone. Telecare and teleassistance technology can contribute to their safety, independence, autonomy and quality of life. The aims of this research were to identify if using personal alarms provides a sense of security to older people living alone and their support network; identify causes and frequency of alarm activation; and identify perception of utility and ease of use and changes after implementation of the teleassistance system. **Method** Methods involved a longitudinal, exploratory, mixed approach on quantitative and qualitative research data. Participants included ten older adults who lived alone (70 years of age or older) and 10 participants from their personal support network. Data were collected using (1) Technology Acceptance Questionnaire; (2) Teleassistance Acceptance Questionnaire; (3) Socioeconomic questionnaire; (4) Eco-Map; and (5) Interview at the beginning and end of the research. A content analysis was employed using the pre-established categories: perception of safety, use of the equipment and reasons of call. **Results & Discussion** Eight women and two men with a mean age of 79 years, 8 years of schooling, and retirees, widowers and single parents participated in the study. The support network was composed of 10 women, informal/family caregivers with more than 15 years of study. As for the perception of safety, at the beginning of equipment use older adults emphasized the sense of security, protection, tranquillity, accompaniment and certainty of help if necessary. After six months of monitoring, 4 elderly people changed their perception of safety after realizing that the equipment was not adequate for their hearing needs. The personal support network referred to a sense of security in the face of rapid assistance and felt relieved to not have to be busy with the care all the time. After six months using the equipment, the personal support network of the elderly over 75 years old reported to feel more tranquillity and safety when compared to the personal support network of the elderly below this age group and with less loss of functional capacity. The personal alarm was considered easy to understand and handle, however there was variation in its use during daily activities and difficulties in adapting to the model and design of the portable driver. Regarding the reasons for activating the mobile device, the main use was the search for emotional support by the elderly from the service attendants, instead of requesting medical assistance. **Conclusion** The personal alarm seems to bring security and tranquillity to the older users and also their support network. The perception of utility can be altered due to the lack of suitability of the equipment in relation to the hearing loss common in later life and lack of sound range in different environments of the residence. The monitoring system had a positive impact on the older users who triggered them because they felt alone. It is considered that teleassistance can be an important ally to the aging process in place and contribute to the safety and quality of life of the elderly who reside alone.

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