

## ORAL SESSION 8: EXPERIENCED HEALTH AND (SELF) RESPECT

### Psychological outcomes of telecare use in informal care: A qualitative intervention study in Slovenia

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**Purpose** Informal carers are the backbone of the long-term care systems in many European countries, yet existing measures supposedly intended to support them only partly cover their needs (Bauer & Sousa-Poza, 2015). Some of the challenges they encounter can be solved through the use of telecare. While several studies focus mainly on outcomes of telecare use for older people (Khosravi et al., 2016; Siegel & Dorner, 2017), there is limited understanding of the psychological outcomes of telecare use for informal carers (Andersson et al., 2017; Smole-Orehek et al., 2019). To address this knowledge gap, the current work identified the positive and negative psychological outcomes of telecare use on the family carers of older people and reviewed their relationship with the functionalities of telecare solutions. Psychological outcomes of six telecare features' use were examined: sensor-based motion detection on an app, notifications and alarms on the app, emergency pendant, smoke detection, call centre service, and fall detector. **Method** The study was conducted in 2018 to 2019 in the Central Slovenian region. A quasi-experimental, pretest–posttest research design was used. A purposive sample of 22 older people and their family carers were asked to test two telecare solutions for four months. In accordance with the aim of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with only the family carers (mean age = 53.9 years, SD = 7.56). These carers, on average, provided 8.5 hours of care per week (SD = 12.15) to older persons who were severely dependent (n = 5), moderately dependent (n = 8) or slightly dependent (n = 9). Interview transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis using Atlas.ti 8, and a combination of deductive and inductive approaches to data coding and analysis was used. **Results and Discussion** The study found a prevalent pattern of positive outcomes from telecare use for the family carers. The majority of the negative psychological outcomes were closely related to the instability of telecare solutions and false alarms, although some of the participants were less bothered by these issues than the others. The psychological outcomes varied depending on the telecare functionalities used. Activity monitoring and app notifications were identified as most contributory to different outcomes. The most commonly mentioned positive psychological outcome was reassurance, followed by peace of mind and reduced anxiety. The most frequently mentioned negative outcomes were anxiety, distrust and stress. Researchers should further explore the relationship between use of different functionalities, psychological outcomes and caregiving situations as well as distance as a factor that influences the psychological outcomes of telecare use on carers.

### References

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