

## POSTER SESSION 3

### Tackling stigma and social isolation through touchscreen games: Let's connect

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**Purpose** Social isolation is a primary obstacle faced by people with dementia, with stigma adding to feelings of isolation (Harris & Caporella, 2014). Touchscreen technologies can be used by people with dementia and may provide meaningful and engaging pastimes to enjoy alone or with others, potentially tackling stigma and social isolation among this population. Here, we examine the potential of a volunteer and staff-supported program introducing touchscreen tablets to people with dementia, to address social isolation and stigma in the community. **Method** Forty-four clients (mean age=81.9 years; mean MoCA=9.18/30) participated in a four-week touchscreen tablet program, facilitated by trained staff and volunteers (n=30; mean age=46.33 years). Before and after the tablet program, staff and volunteers completed the Dementia Attitudes Scale (DAS), while clients completed the Social Provisions Scale (SPS-10) and Quality of Life in Alzheimer's Disease Scale (QoL-AD). All participants completed a post-study interview to capture their experiences regarding the tablet program, such as benefits and barriers to implementation. **Results and Discussion** Pre- and post- comparison of clients' SPS-10 and QoL-AD revealed no change (SPS-10:  $p=0.950$ , QoL-AD:  $p=0.122$ ). Pre- and post- comparison of staff and volunteer DAS total scores revealed a significant improvement ( $p=0.037$ ). Thematic analysis of post-study inter-views revealed key themes describing benefits and challenges experienced by clients, staff, and volunteers during the tablet program. The results confirm the potential for training staff and volunteers to support people with dementia to engage with touchscreen technology. Although there were no significant changes in social isolation, as reported on the SPS-10, interviews revealed that participants enjoyed the social aspect of learning and playing together. Additionally, by challenging misconceptions regarding the abilities of people with dementia participation in the tablet program appeared to tackle stigma.

#### References

- Harris, P. B., & Caporella, C. A. (2014). An intergenerational choir formed to lessen Alzheimer's disease stigma in college students and decrease the social isolation of people with Alzheimer's disease and their family members: a pilot study. *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*, 29(3), 270-81. [10.1177/1533317513517044](https://doi.org/10.1177/1533317513517044)
- Jodrell, P., & Astell, A. J. (2016). Studies Involving People With Dementia and Touchscreen Technology: A Literature Review. *JMIR rehabilitation and assistive technologies*, 3(2), e10. [10.2196/rehab.5788](https://doi.org/10.2196/rehab.5788)

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Figure 1. Volunteer and Client Interaction