

User involvement in R&D in the field of Gerontechnology – Where does it go?

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Purpose A recurring critique within the field of Gerontechnology is the comparably low market success in view of resources invested in research and design (Neven & Peine, 2017). Several authors argue that this is caused, among others, by the lack of user involvement (Bjering, Curry & Maeder, 2014). Development and design processes of products for older people follow the same logic as in general product development. Recently, a debate started to question these ‘classical’ innovation processes, arguing that these do not properly take into account the characteristics and needs of older people. Particularly, the mismatch between designed properties of older people and the variety of situations in which they are used has been criticized by researchers in the field of social gerontechnology (Giaccardi, Kuijer & Neven, 2016). This leads to the question on how these processes are organized and which role older people play in those. There are approaches and concepts specifically focusing on the field of Gerontechnology (Demirbilek & Demirkan, 2004; Künemund, 2018). However, there seems to be a discrepancy between theoretical approaches and practical implementation (Merkel & Kucharski, 2018). **Method** We conducted a systematic literature review on participatory design in Gerontechnology (Merkel & Kucharski, 2018). In this review, we included 26 studies matching our inclusion criteria. We updated and extended this literature review by specifically looking at research and design processes reported in those studies and theoretical approaches. **Results and Discussion** Based on the literature review, we show that design studies in the field of Gerontechnology focus only on certain phases of design processes and seldom report a whole R&D process. Although characteristics of the field of Gerontechnology and hence older people seem to be increasingly acknowledged, methods applied do not pay attention to the concerns and criticism by scholars from social Gerontechnology. We argue in favor of new R&D approaches and restructured processes and provide a first draft of a conceptual design framework.

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