

Current trends in Gerontechnology. Recent findings from the German speaking chapter

B. Klein, S. Merkel (Convener)

Klein & Merkel (2020). *Gerontechnology* 19(Suppl); <https://doi.org/10.4017/gt.2020.19.s.69998.1>

Participants: V. Gallistl (Austria), S. Merkel (Germany), J. Tessmer, (Germany) C. Oppenauer (Austria), B. Klein (Germany) (discussant). **ISSUE** Gerontechnology is fueled not only by new technologies, but also increasingly by new developments and insights from social sciences. Still, newly developed devices seem to follow a “technology-push” approach rather than consider the (future) user’s needs. As some authors argue, this is caused by a divide in the study of ageing and the study of technology (Peine & Neven, 2019). This symposium seeks to bring these two views together. **CONTENT** The symposium brings together research and evidence of the German speaking chapters of the ISG (Austria, Germany, and Switzerland) and covers a broad spectrum of recent developments. **STRUCTURE** Vera Gallistl looks at the contexts and everyday practices of non-use of digital technologies. She argues that non-use of digital technology is not only characterized by the absence of ICTs in everyday life, but actively formed by older adults’ through a wide variety of everyday practices. Sebastian Merkel critically engages with a promising technology – smart speakers. It is argued that although the technology itself has large potential in advancing Gerontechnology, it also bears risk and current developments do not pay attention to the needs of (future) users. Tessmer explores the potential of a humanoid robot as a training assistant for physiotherapeutic exercises. Due to technical limitations and scarce time resources of physiotherapists the system is (still?) not usable in this therapeutic setting. Tessmer suggests exploring the possibilities for prevention. Oppenauer tackles ethical issues from a meta-perspective contradicting the requirement of user involvement in R&D and the still not happening take up of AAL-technologies. **CONCLUSION** Consequently, it is argued that Gerontechnology benefits from a closer cooperation and knowledge exchange of technology scholar and ageing scholars. Moreover, we conclude that although older users are participating in the design and development processes as active users, there still is room for improvement.

References

Peine, A. & Neven, L. (2019). From Intervention to Co-constitution: New Directions in Theorizing about Aging and Technology. *The Gerontologist*, 59(1), 15–21. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny050>

Keywords: technology development, interdisciplinary collaboration, methodology, quality of life

Address: Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany

Email: bklein@fb4.fra-uas.de; sebastian.merkel@ruhr-uni-bochum.de