Gerontechnology for who? A responsible framework for diversity and inclusivity for health technology R. A. Søraa

Purpose Gerontechnology is a grouping of technologies made to benefit older adults, as well as a research field that facilitates discussion of important mitigation of age-related issues for this age group. There are over 727 million people aged 65+ in the world today. This is projected to double in the next 30 years, increasing from 9.3% to 16% of the global population (UN DESA, 2020). This radical demographic change calls for new technological solutions (gerontechnologies), geron-policies, and re-structuring of ageing societies. But it is important to not homogenize this rather heterogeneous group. In this presentation I question which people are included in the plans, narratives, and infrastructure networks of gerontechnology. In doing so I raise the question of "gerontechnology for who?" I question how gerontechnology, albeit being a radical opportunity to better lives of older adults in general, also holds the power to reinforce excluding trends in technological advancement, where the standard body is e.g. still based on male and not female bodies. I highlight the importance of decolonizing technology access issues (Mohamed, 2020) where the rich Global North accumulate resources (e.g. medical staff, and equipment) and the importance of reframing the discourse of healthy ageing so that is not based around assumptions of being (able)bodied. I also highlight other exclusive parameters, e.g. heteronormativity, racial injustice, and class-based discrimination through technology (Viswanathan et al., 2017). I question how gerontechnology in the era of Artificial Intelligence can facilitate an inclusive and diverse discourse where older adults of all shapes and sizes and with multitudes of backgrounds can benefit from the technological possibilities gerontechnologies can bring. Method This study is based on a triangulation of qualitative interviews from several European funded research projects assessing how gerontechnology impacts end-users as well as desk-research to map the signification for a wide array of heterogenous user-groups. The paper uses social robots as a main case for gerontechnological development and is informed by the EU Horizon 2020 projects Robotics4EU and LIFEBOTS-EXCHANGE, where a wide array of expert interviews, co-production activities, and end-user studies have shown that there is a need for an interrogative study that unwraps the diversity of the perceived, planned for, and actual users of gerontechnologies like social robots. Through triangulating and analyzing this data through a Grounded Theory approach with thematic coding I have developed a responsible framework for diversity and inclusivity for health technology. Results and Discussion I interpret these findings through Science and Technology Studies (STS), with a critical analytical lens using Scripttheory (Fallan, 2008; Akrich, 1987) and Non-User perspectives (Wyatt, 2003) presenting a preliminary diversity model for gerontechnology. I argue that we need a deeper socio-technical understanding of who are included in the infrastrucurization of gerontechnology (and in what way) and who are excluded from benefitting from these technologies and debates. The responsible framework developed thus provides a set of discussion points for involved stakeholders like developers, policymakers, end-users, on how the technology under consideration has scripted perceived users, how users are actually implementing the technologies into their daily practices, and who might be excluded as non-users of the gerontechnologies in guestion.

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