

ORAL PAPER PRESENTATION 4: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Digital engagement and quality of life of participants at a University of the Third Age

L. J. Lorenzi, P. A. R. Alvarez, P. Bet, P. C. Castro

Purpose According to the United Nations (2019), by 2050 the world will have more than double the current number of older than 65 years old individuals. Thus, it is essential to promote healthy aging, through actions, strategies and policies to encourage disease prevention, health promotion and improvement in the quality of life of ageing individuals. Quality of life can be defined as “an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns” (WHO, 1998). Although there are studies in the literature with positive results regarding the use of technologies in quality of life, well-being and independence, these results are still unclear because they do not consider individuals who do not use these technologies and how this non-use affects quality of life (DAMANT et al., 2017). The objective of this study was to verify the relationship between quality of life and digital engagement of older individuals, participants of a University of the Third Age (U3A). **Method** This is an observational, cross-sectional, quantitative study. The sample consisted of spontaneous demand from students enrolled in a U3A, older than 50 years. The evaluation was carried out in October 2019 through interviews with participants in which a questionnaire was applied with sociodemographic questions, data on internet use (how many times on average have you used the Internet in the last 3 months?) and the WHOQOL-Brief version translated and validated into Portuguese, with score from 0 to 20 (WHO, 2022). The questionnaire data were counted through frequency, mean and standard deviation, in addition, the relationship between digital engagement and quality of life was verified by logistic regression using the Backward Stepwise method, corrected for potential confounders age and education, using SPSS software. **Results and Discussion** A total of 107 individuals participated in the study, with an average age of 67.1 years (± 8.1 years), with 39.2% having higher or technical education and only 10.3% having incomplete elementary education. Among the participants, most were digitally engaged (81.3%) and the mean total score of the WHOQOL-Brief instrument was 15.8 (± 2.6). According to the regression performed, it was possible to observe that the relationship between digital engagement and quality of life (based on Whoqol-Brief and its domains) was not statistically significant (Table 1). However, there was statistical significance in relation to age and digital engagement, that is, with increasing age there is a tendency for digital engagement to decrease (p -value=0,025; $B=-0,076$). Due to the negative effects of the necessary social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, we suggest a future study on the use of technologies and the quality of life after the period of social distance, used as a strategy to minimize the effects of the pandemic.

References

- Damant, J., Knapp, M., Freddolino, P., & Lombard, D. (2017). Effects of digital engagement on the quality of life of older people. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 25(6), 1679-1703. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12335>
- United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Population Ageing 2019: Highlights*.
- Who (1998). *WHOQOL: User Manual*. Division of mental health and prevention of substance abuse. Geneva: Switzerland.
- Who (2021). *WHOQOL: Measuring Quality of Life. Introducing the instruments*. 2022. Available at: <https://www.who.int/tools/whoqol>. Accessed on: 10/03/2022.

Keywords: older people, technology, digital inclusion, quality of Life, healthy aging

Address: Department of Gerontology, Federal University of São Carlos, Brazil

Email: castro@ufscar.br

Acknowledgement This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001. We also acknowledge the Post Graduate Program in Bioengineering at the University of São Paulo.

Table 1. Results of the logistic regression using the Backward Stepwise method, corrected for age and education.

Caption: D.E.: Digital Engagement; D.D.: Digital Disengagement; SD: Standard deviation

WHOQOL-Brief Domains	Mean(SD)		p-value	Exp(B)	B	95% C.I. para Exp(B)	
	D.E.	D.D.				Lower	Higher
Physical health	15.34(± 2.60)	14.77(± 3.04)	0.695	1.039	0.039	0.857	1.260
Psychological health	15.07(± 2.51)	14.87(± 2.44)	0.827	1.023	0.023	0.832	1.258
Social relationships	14.15(± 3.90)	15.07(± 2.87)	0,162	0,893	-0,114	0,761	1,047
Environmental health	14.61(± 2.81)	14.33(± 1.96)	0.694	1.040	0.039	0.857	1.261
Overall	15.77(± 2.54)	15.70(± 2.70)	0.885	0.985	-0.16	0.798	1.214