

Dementia and Technology

Assistive technology and home care: Experiences of older adults with and without dementia in Sweden. J. Borg, M. Alam, A.M. Boström, L. Marmstål Hammar. *Gerontechnology* 25(s)

Purpose By 2030, the global population aged 65 years and older is expected to exceed one billion, up from 761 million in 2021 [1]. By the end of the same period, the number of people living with dementia, most of whom are older than 65, is projected to increase from 55 million in 2020 to 78 million [2]. Older adults should be supported to live in the community and, whenever they wish, should receive care and assistive technology that reflect their preferences [3–5]. In Sweden, this is largely facilitated through home care services provided in ordinary housing [6]. This study compared the selection, use, and outcomes of prescribed assistive products among older home care clients with and without dementia in Sweden. It also examined the relationships between the use of assistive products and perceptions of home care, loneliness, and safety. **Method** This study used data from a questionnaire survey conducted by the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) in Sweden in 2017. The survey covered, among other aspects, demographics, health, living situation, home care and assistive technology, and was distributed to the entire population of home care clients aged ≥65 years (N=144,643). Dementia status was later identified using diagnosis and medication records, also maintained by NBHW. Responses from 89,811 clients (response rate 62.1%), of whom 8.9% had dementia, were analyzed using logistic and proportional odds regression models [7]. **Results and Discussion** Excluding ordinary spectacles, 88.2% of respondents used prescribed assistive products. Compared with those without dementia, respondents with dementia were significantly less likely to use assistive products for seeing and reading, hearing, mobility, and hygiene; equally likely to use communication products; and more likely to use memory-supporting products. These patterns raise concerns that the assistive product needs of home care clients with dementia may not be fully met, given their likely equal or greater functional limitations across domains. Respondents with dementia participated less in selecting assistive products and used fewer products overall, which may contribute to their reporting lower perceived benefit. Across the entire sample, users of assistive products, regardless of dementia status, felt more anxious, lonely, and unsafe at home than non-users. They also reported that their opinions and wishes regarding assistance were considered to a lesser extent, and that they were treated less favorably by home care personnel. Overall, the findings underscore the need to enhance person-centred assistive technology provision for those living with dementia, and to strengthen person-centred home care practices for clients who rely on assistive products [7].

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