

Basic Values of Gerontechnology

ISG2026 centers on a theme deeply connected to societal challenges worldwide. “Empowering” is a concept that resonates across communities — for people living under deprived circumstances, those experiencing frailty, and individuals working in demanding environments. The theme Empowering Aging with Gerontechnology strikes at the heart of these challenges.

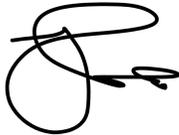
In Gerontechnology, however, we do more than simply identify challenges. We seek evidence-based pathways through which technological solutions may meaningfully support an aging population. This includes examining whether such solutions lie within ethical boundaries and understanding how these boundaries differ across regions and cultures. Gerontechnology encourages us to create environments that value older adults for their abilities and ambitions, while designing innovations that support these ambitions and acknowledge disabilities without letting them define the individual. The emphasis is clear: recognize limitations, but design for abilities, competencies, and skills.

A glance through this year’s abstracts reveals that artificial intelligence and robotics are claiming a growing niche in Gerontechnology, while longstanding attention to the social dimensions of aging research remains strong. As always, contributions span health and health care, home and independent living, and—importantly—many highlight co-creation and co-design with older adults.

This brings us back to the ISG2026 theme: empowering aging. Aging may be accompanied by functional or cognitive decline, but it does not inherently mean resignation to an unhealthy or unfulfilling life. A challenge we should take up as a community is not only to involve older adults in our research but to assign them meaningful roles within our research projects. Doing so is itself an act of empowerment.

This year, the ISG World Conference returns to Vancouver, Canada — a city of natural beauty, ocean proximity, cultural diversity, and a vibrant urban core. Like other global metropolitan areas, Vancouver faces the realities of urban aging. During ISG2026, let us remain in close dialogue, challenge each other, and engage deeply with the dilemmas inherent in designing and researching according to Gerontechnology principles.

Keep an open mind throughout ISG2026, and above all, stay healthy.



Helianthe Kort, PhD
President of the International Society for Gerontechnology