

Imagine a World of Gerontechnology Without Gerontechnologies

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To begin, I would like to make a distinction between Gerontechnology, an interdisciplinary field of science dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of older adults, and gerontechnologies, which are products intended to accomplish that outcome. Whereas some definitions of gerontechnologies recognize the contributions of mainstream technologies, all definitions include technologies specifically designed for older adults, often without an understanding of older adults' needs and preferences. Like assistive technology, the term itself is often stigmatizing. At the same time, it is viewed as neither useful nor usable, prompting then ISG president William Kearns in 2017 to question the need to regulate gerontechnologies. In contrast, this talk is a call to action to replace the need for gerontechnologies altogether with mainstream products based on inclusive and universal design strategies that will represent the needs and wants of all individuals throughout the lifespan.

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