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Correspondence

Listmail discussion

An Internet listmail discussion forum hosted by the International Society of Gerontechnology is available to promote free exchange of information and views about the subject of gerontechnology. The forum welcomes comment and questions relating to ISG activities, gerontechnology research and development, user needs and acceptance, technology delivery, ethics, quality, standards, and more. It is administrated by Lawrence R. Normie and moderated by Lauren E. Storck. To subscribe to the ISG discussion list visit *www.jdc.org.il/mailman/listinfo/isg_discussion*. Subscription is free and open to ISG members and non-members alike.

The ISG Internet Forum was quiet recently, with few messages for discussions online. Feedback from ISG Journal readers is invited, including suggestions for using the available open free ISG Forum.

Lauren E. Storck, Forum Facilitator
E: *drstorck@caregiving-online.com*

Baroque trio sonatas

Poulis[1] advocated playing trio sonatas up to a high age, and showed that loosing control over one hand does not imply the necessity of stopping with playing music. I would like to draw attention to another handicap which can be circumpassed in a simple way. The handicap I refer to is the loosing of control over the little finger of the left hand, a serious problem when performing with a flute or comparable instrument. The solution I suggest is to use a recorder for the missing notes, the playing of which can be done without the use of this finger.

References

1. Poulis JA. Options for seniors in playing baroque trio sonatas. Gerontechnology 2007;6(1):56-57

Hans Wiertsema
E: hansiny@xs4all.nl

Book review

Alan Walker, editor. Understanding Quality of Life in Old Age. Growing older series. Berkshire: Open University Press. 2006. 209 pages. ISBN: 0335 21523 8 (pb) 0335 21524 6 (hb). Price: £ 21,99

Understanding quality of life in old age is the third introductory volume to the ESRC Growing Older (GO) Programme series – the largest social science investigation of ageing and older people ever undertaken in the UK – which will consist in total out of 11 volumes. In this volume researchers who carried out 22 of the 24 projects combined in 8 thematic groups synthesize their findings.

In the first chapter an overview of the total book is provided and the key themes of the Programme. It also provides a summary of the different methodological approaches taken to the measurement of quality of life (QoL) and outlines the structure and operation of the GO Programme. The two main objectives of GO were: (i) to create a multi-disciplinary and coordinated social science programme aimed at producing new knowledge on the factors that determine this quality in later life; and (ii) to try to contribute to the development of policies and practice so as to influence the extension of quality of life.

Chapter two is titled 'Quality of life – Meaning and measurement' and reveals the complexity of the concept of QoL. Different definitions of QoL are presented. The meaning of QoL throughout our history is explored and the shift from the concept of well-being towards QoL is given attention. From the concept of QoL we are taken towards measurement of QoL which is addressed in a brief review. Overall this chapter raises awareness of the wide range of factors impacting QoL in old age and contributes to the debate about the nature of the concept.

The third chapter draws on four complementary studies conducted as part of the GO Programme. It is argued that QoL can no longer be seen as a simply medical outcome. Instead various social structures such as class, gender and ethnicity might interplay to enable (or restrict) older people to engage with the opportunities available to them and should be examined. When reading this chapter, we, as gerontechnologists, might ask ourselves whether this is also true with respect to applicability of technologies.

Getting out and about is the theme of chapter four. To be able to make and execute choices in moving around within and outside the home, and not simply to accomplish the necessary and desirable activities of daily living is suggested to be crucial. Again four GO projects form the basis of the chapter. The impact of factors such as the material environment, health, transport, morale, the neighbourhood, and security on mobility are discussed. It is concluded that by creating neighbourhoods that are suitable for people of all ages and by reducing

crime as well as fear of crime, all residents in an area, not just older people, could feel more secure and would be more likely to engage with their local communities.

The next three chapters focus on social aspects of QoL. Chapter five examines the experience of taking up social and economic roles and discusses the social and economic exchanges which take place in different environments. This chapter provides more details on negative and positive effects of taking up specific social and economic roles on QoL. In chapter six the focus shifts more towards the impact of aspects of gender and ethnicity on social involvement. Chapter seven is about social isolation and loneliness. Social engagement is suggested as being a key factor in achieving the goal of successful ageing. Whether technology can provide structures and tools to be able to be socially involved is something we, as gerontechnologists, might be able to provide insight in.

The chapters eight up till ten form a cluster around the subject of identity.

The first of the three chapters is titled 'Frailty, identity and the quality of later life'. It discusses the possibility for an older person to resist the negative implications of frailty for their personal well-being. The project findings in this chapter identify ways in which care staff and family carers can enhance communication and relationships, listen to older people's concerns about the present, and promote the identity and QoL of frail older people in different settings and circumstances.

The second of the three chapters is entitled 'Identity, meaning and social support'. This chapter illuminates the ways in which older people use social support services. Its key argument is that the use of care services is mediated through a more important activity: the maintenance and reconstruction of identities and social relationships made necessary by increased dependence on help from others. Overall findings suggest that there are limits to the degree to which older people's conceptions of their circumstances and needs can be reconciled with those of potential service providers. The gaps between models that inform medical and social care practitioners in their work with older people and the lay conceptions of the older people themselves are real.

'Elderly bereaved spouses – Issues of belief, well-being and support', is the title of the last chapter of the cluster. In this chapter the impact of becoming bereaved is researched and discussed in relation to belief, identity, gender, health and safety. When reading these three chapters as a technologist, a lot of ideas on how we can apply and develop technologies to answer the needs and problems as described arise.

The final chapter 'Conclusion – From research to action' shines its light on the global phenomenon of ageing from a political, research and societal point of view.

This third book in the Growing Older series provides us with valuable information on the concept of quality of life. Those of us who use quality of life as a measure in their research will find this book to be a good source of information on how to measure and interpret these data. In addition this book provides us with a social and economic framework which underlines the significance of research in the field of gerontechnology. Although not reviewed here the two preceding books of this GO series: 'Growing Older – Quality of life in old age' and 'Aging Well – Quality of life in old age', are recommended as well for the same reasons.

Tamara Derksen MSc
E: T.Derksen@tue.nl

People

Who is who: ISG board (3)

Mitsuo Nagamachi PhD CPE, Vice-president

Mitsuo Nagamachi (Kobe 1936) holds a BA (1958), an MA (1960), and a PhD degree (1963) in experimental psychology from Hiroshima University. His PhD thesis was entitled, 'A Markov model of probability learning'. He has been certified as a Professional Ergonomist in both Japan and the USA. At the engineering school of his alma mater he taught human factors and ergonomics as a research assistant (1963-1968), associate professor (1968-1978), and full professor (1978-1995). From 1995 to 2000 he served as president of Kure National College of Technology, followed in 2000 by his appointment as Dean of the School of Human and Social Environment of Hiroshima International University, which has a Department of Kansei Design. In April 2005 he took up the position of guest professor in the 'User Interface Institute' of Kyushu University. Since April 2006 he also works as vice-chief director and professor at Hagi International University. Professor Naga-

machi held research positions and guest professorships in Mexico and the USA. He invented and developed Kansei Engineering, a form of Total Quality Management (TQM) based on implementing customer's needs and desires into product function and design. Kansei is a Japanese word that denotes a good emotional feeling or atmosphere. When visiting a restaurant, you may feel 'this is a good restaurant' and ' good taste' from the interior, service manner, etc. As the founder of Kansei Engineering at Hiroshima University more than 30 years ago, Professor Nagamachi has seen his concept applied everywhere from the car industry to cosmetics, ladies' underwear, and even a river bridge. One of the Kansei engineering applications he introduced is a cyber system into the small village named 'Kimita' which implies all the houses are connected by an information net and the elderly now touch the computer to communicate with their grandchildren or friends. The village headquarters issues information to all houses through this net and this cyber system resulted in the village atmosphere becoming more active. Professor Nagamachi has been engaged in creating assisting devices for elderly people and is now developing a new type of assisting vehicle.
He has (co)authored 84 books and book chapters, and 180 contributions to scientific journals. He received both national and international awards from engineering and ergonomics societies, has been active in a number of such societies, edited research journals, and still serves as a peer reviewer for NEDO (Japan Government Advanced Technology Proposal). His current research interests include ergonomics, Kansei engineering, virtual reality, and gerontechnology. In 2005 Mitsuo Nagamachi hosted the 5th International Conference on Gerontechnology of the ISG.
E: *m.nagamachi@hagi.ac.jp* or *nagmit@za3-so-net.ne.jp*

Who is who: New editors

Anna Dickinson PhD, Associate editor

Anna Dickinson (1971) obtained her PhD at the University of Birmingham and is currently the Royal Society for Edinburgh / Lloyds TSB Research Fellow for the Ageing Population at the School of Computing, University of Dundee. She works with older adults, who are novices or non-users of computers to find ways to use computer technology to support intergenerational communication and reduce social isolation. Her other interests include accessibility, training methods and new methodologies for requirements gathering and evaluation with older, novice computer users. She has also worked on the UTOPIA project, the IBM-funded 'non-browser' project and with the web accessibility consultancy, Digital Media Access group (DMAG). While recognising the tremendous potential of computer technologies to improve well-being and support older adults through the ageing process, she also believes that the introduction of technology should not always be assumed to be a positive development, but should be carefully evaluated in terms of user perceptions and experiences.
E: adickinson@computing.dundee.ac.uk

William D. Kearns PhD, Associate editor

William D. Kearns received his PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of South Florida in December, 1989 and became a faculty member at the university shortly thereafter. From 1992 to 2003 he was the Director of the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Department of Information Technology, and has served since 1996 as USF's Executive Liaison to the Internet2 Project, a consortium of over 200 prestigious universities. Dr. Kearns' research interests include the study of wandering behavior in persons with dementia and the creation of electronic measurement systems to study how this phenomenon occurs in home settings. Dr. Kearns has authored or co-authored over 30 research articles and book chapters on information systems and in healthcare research and is presently an assistant professor in the Department of Aging and Mental Health at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida in Tampa.
E: kearns@fmhi.usf.edu

ISG Business

New date for Pisa conference

Agreement has been reached between the Italian organizers and a delegation of the ISG board on a date change for the 6th International Conference on Gerontechnology in Pisa in 2008. The new time frame

is 4 to 7 June 2008. At the same occasion the scientific content has been discussed with the following results. In total six plenary invited talks (keynotes) are planned, on different relevant topics, in addition to sessions for oral and poster presentations, workshops and round tables.

The following sessions for posters and oral presentations are foreseen:

(i) Active ageing and leisure: Technology in relation to physical, mental and social health;

(ii) Ageing-in-place: The smart living environment: Situated self-learning applications for the home and its private and public environs;

(iii) Biomechanics of ageing: Models of movement and movement control

(iv) Biorobotics for active longevity: Smart systems for compensation and replacement of functions;

(v) Care support technology: Technical support of care logistics, of care professionals, and of family carers;

(vi) Cognitive ageing: Technology for learning and teaching new technical skills to older adults, including memory support;

(vii) Environmental engineering: Technical interventions in early life to prevent chronic conditions later;

(viii) Inclusive design and ergonomics: Including characteristics of older consumers in mainstream designs;

(ix) Mobility: Driving and public transport: Self-correcting vehicles, and information systems for public transport;

(x) Social policy: Technology for infrastructures and for the support of senior identity and self esteem;

(xi) Stay connected: ICT for an ageing society: Applications of internet and internet connectivity;

(xii) Working conditions and entrepreneurship: Technology for second careers and work ambitions of older person.

As to symposia and round tables, the following topics are chosen:

(i) Compensation aids: Compensation or assistive technology to restore weakening human functions;

(ii) Conciliation of technological and medical issues in elderly healthcare (together with the Italian Society for Geriatrics and Gerontology);

(iii) Domotics: Home automation technology for comfort, health, safety, security and energy management;

(iv) Financial instruments for safe longevity: Informatics for proper financial planning and implementation, including fraud prevention

(v) Marketing directed to seniors: Strategies to satisfy ambitions and needs of older adults

(vi) Navigation systems and their effective use: Design and evaluation of mixed systems and transponders for directed city walks of older persons;

(vii) Sensory replacement systems: Cochlear, vestibular and retinal implants for older persons and their evaluation.

I hope to meet you all in Pisa next year!

H. Bouma, ISG president

E: H.Bouma@gerontechnology.info

First local chapter: Japan

December 8, 2006, the Japan Chapter of the ISG had its first meeting in Tokyo in conjunction with the Gerontechnology Forum of AIST. A board was formally established consisting of Dr. Hiroyuki Umemuro, Tokyo Institute of Technology as president, the undersigned as secretary, and as additional board members: Dr. Kazuo Yamaba, Nihon Fukushi Uniersity, Dr. Shigekazu Ishihara, Hiroshima International University, Dr. Ryoko Fukuda, Keio University, and Dr. Nana Itoh, AIST. During the meeting the letter of acknowledgement of the ISG president, Prof-emer. Herman Bouma was read, followed by a symposium on 'Technology of Life Enhancement' and eight scientific papers.

We consider it a successful kick-off of the Japan Chapter, and intend to report regularly in this journal on our activities. The report in technical detail of the first meeting of the Japan Chapter will be reported in the next issue of the journal.

Ken Sagawa PhD, secretary of ISG Japan Chapter

E: sagawa-k@aist.go.jp

World news

AFRAN and gerontechnology

AFRAN is a dedicated research network of key African and international scholars, policy-makers and civil society representatives in the field of ageing. It serves as a standing committee of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) and is formally endorsed by the United Nations Programme on Ageing as an essential partner in furthering the Research Agenda on Ageing and implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the Africa region.

AFRAN's work on research and training is

complementary and mutually supportive to the activities of the African Gerontological Society (AGES), which focuses on (i) the development of links and partnerships with policy makers and relevant civil society organisations at a national and regional level, (ii) broad awareness raising, advocacy and effective information dissemination to members and key stakeholders.
AFRAN's main purpose is to act as a coordinating mechanism for fostering African research and training on ageing, and as a platform for forging partnerships and exchange between institutions and bodies in the North and South. Gerontechnology related research and training topics include ageing and health, poverty abatement, living arrangements for older persons, and HIV/AIDS and older persons.
AFRAN currently consists of 53 individual members and 2 organisational members, and is inviting all researchers, policy makers or practitioners engaged, or with an interest in research on ageing in Africa to join the network at www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/afran.
Isabella Aboderin PhD, Oxford Institute of Ageing, Oxford, United Kingdom
E: isabella.aboderin@ageing.ox.ac.uk
Monica Ferreira PhD, Institute of Ageing in Africa, University of Cape Town, South Africa
E: mf@cormack.uct.ac.za
Mugo Gachuhi PhD, Department of Sociology, Kenyatta University, Kenya
E: mugogachuhi@yahoo.com
Jaco Hoffman, University of Pretoria, South Africa
E: jaconda@iafrica.com
Chuks Mba PhD, UN Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana
E: chuksmba@yahoo.com
Tavengwa Nhongo PhD, Africa Regional Representative, HelpAge International, Nairobi, Kenya
E: nhongo@wananchi.com
Ebrima Sall PhD, Department of Research, CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal
E: ebrima.sall@codesria.sn

Centro Ricerche e Relazioni Cornaglia
The 'Centro Ricerche e Relazioni Cornaglia' is a non-profit Italian organisation, founded in 1982 to honour the memory of Francesco Cornaglia, who spent his life serving medical scientists with great generosity. The centre is engaged in research for elderly people, concerning an air floating system against bed sores, residential needs of disabled and chronically ill elderly, technology for independence, to name a few. Its main aim is to inform the elderly through the publication of informative books and pamphlets written in Italian, and the organisation of meetings. In 2006 the centre contributed to the International Conference on Ageing, Disability and Independence in St. Petersburg, Florida.
Dario Bracco
Ce.R.R.Co., Via Perugia, 24 - 10152 Torino, Italy
E: *ricerchecornaglia@tiscalinet.it*

Calendar of Events

April 17-21, 2007
Geographies of practice and the urban outdoors
San Francisco, California, USA
Organizer: Association of American Geographers
Info: *www.aag.org/annualmeetings/SF2007/index.cfm*

April 18-20, 2007
The International Educational and Networking Forum for eHealth, Telemedicine and Health ICT (Med @Tel)
Luxembourg, Luxembourg
Organizer: Luxexpo SA
Info: *www.medetel.lu/index.php*

May 11-12, 2007
Supportive technology and design for healthy aging
University of Washington campus, USA
Organizer: University of Washington Institute on Aging
Info: *www.depts.washington.edu/geron/save_the_date_lrg.php*

May 13-15, 2007
American Telemedicine Association 2007 Annual Meeting
Nashville, Tennessee, USA
Organizer: American Telemedicine Association
Info: *www.americantelemed.org/abstracts2007/CallMain.asp*

Announcements of meetings and other events for the Gerontechnology Calendar should be submitted by e-mail to: *j.e.m.h.v.bronswijk@gerontechnology.info*. The editors decide to include or not include the announcement of a certain event.

The most up-to-date forthcoming list may be found at *www.gerontechjournal.net*