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EXPLORING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA REGARDING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO SAVE QUALITY OF LIFE AND INDEPENDENT LIVING AT HOME

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Research on assistive home technology (AT) aims to reduce care costs and increase quality of life of people with dementia. Currently it is unclear what the needs of people with dementia are and what kind of support they desire. The reported survey aims to identify personal attitudes towards AT in daily living: As how disturbing is the loss of competence in activities of daily living (ADL) experienced? For which ADLs would AT be accepted? Which kind of sensor technology and interaction devices would be tolerated at home? Interviews with open questions and rating scales were conducted with 53 persons (m = 14, f = 39; aged 19-59). Subjects were professional care givers (n = 23), relatives of people with dementia (n = 15), and persons without dementia background (n = 15). The answers were evaluated statistically. Losing the ability to take care of own body hygiene was judged as most disturbing. Washing clothes was judged as least disturbing. In general people preferred being helped by family members. However, AT was mostly preferred over professional care. People can best imagine AT help for using the telephone and managing medicine taking. Help by AT is nearly excluded for social relationships and finances. Transponders on objects are accepted best, closely followed by motion sensors. Video sensors are approved least. The PDA is the most accepted shape of AT. When developing AT, it is worthwhile to include potential user groups in decisions about areas of support as well as technical design to increase acceptance.