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Abstract title

To go where no old person has gone before: value-based design of mobility innovations for aging well

Abstract text

Due to physical decline, older people become less mobile. This limits their capacity to perform activities of daily living and decreases social participation. In order to revert this trend, mobility innovations need to be designed. This can be done by studying what the elderly value in their daily life and how reduced mobility inhibits them. Innovations should then take away these barriers and support personal values.

In order to design mobility innovations for elderly people, we applied a value-driven approach and conducted 10 in-depth interviews with solitary living, community-dwelling elderly in The Netherlands. We

questioned them about what makes them happy, how they spend the day, and what they would like to do but cannot due to physical limitations. We also assessed physical activity with the Physical Activity Scale for the Elderly (PASE). The interviews were translated into mind maps that show how each person wants to live to the full (their values), how reduced mobility hinders them and how mobility aids help. The mind maps were input for a creative session with designers.

The interviewees (average age 80) had a low physically activity level (PASE=41) and used professional homecare. Biking and walking were the main means of transport. Most important values were being independent from family, grocery shopping and having an active social life. These values were hindered by small issues (e.g. doorsteps that hamper wheeled walkers) or general ones (e.g. aversion to wheeled walkers: "they are for old people"; fear of carrying a lot of money when going shopping). Using the mind maps, designers were able to create innovative mobility ideas that elaborated on the wheeled walker and its stigma.

The value-based approach captured the diverse aspects of subject specific values and explained the role of mobility therein. In order to create mobility aids that make a difference and can count on high acceptance, designers should focus on taking away the barriers that prevent elderly people from fulfilling their values.

Topic

03 Behavioral Sciences

Keywords

03 Assessment - Procedures & Methods

04 Attitudes & Opinions

40 Physical activity & Exercise

Presentation

Oral presentation

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