

Mapping the Adoption Process of Communication Technology to Maintain Contact between Older Adults with Intellectual Disability in Out-of-home Residence and Their Families: A Multiple-Case Study Research

Authors : Carmit Noa Shpigelman, Michal Isaacson

Abstract : Over the last decades, the improvement in welfare and health services and the increase in awareness of the needs of people with intellectual disability has led to an increase in their life expectancy, and many of them enter into old age. Furthermore, many older adults with intellectual disability live in out-of-home residence. This situation, in addition to the parents' aging process as the main caregivers, may lead to a reduction in contact with the family and, as a result, decreased level of the residents' (older adults with intellectual disability) well-being. A plausible solution for this condition may be using communication technologies. Previous studies indicate that using communication technologies among older adults contributes to maintaining the relationship with others, decreasing the older adult's sense of loneliness, and increasing their level of well-being. Using communication technologies may be especially valuable for older adults in the current global pandemic of COVID-19 and the associated restrictions of social distancing. However, to date, research on using communication technologies among people with intellectual disability has focused on younger cohorts. Moreover, research on the adoption of technologies among older adults with intellectual disability has focused more on assistive technologies and less on communication technologies. To address these practice and research gaps, the present study focuses on the adoption process of communication technology among older adults with intellectual disability (over the age of 45 years) who live in supported accommodation. Fifteen residents participated in an intervention program where they received a tablet with a video communication application and through which they were able to contact their families. A multiple-case study methodology was applied to capture the experiences, including barriers and needs, of the residents from three perspectives: the resident, the family member, and a staff member from the residential setting. The data was collected via quantitative and qualitative measures at different time points over the intervention. The findings demonstrate the contribution of using communication technology for the well-being of older adults with intellectual disability in supported accommodation. The findings also map the adoption process among this population, including pitfalls. The present study contributes to developing best practices on how to accommodate communication technologies to older adults with intellectual disability for maintaining contact with others.

Keywords : adoption, aging, communication, intellectual disability, technology

Conference Title : ICPDR 2022 : International Conference on Physical Disability Rehabilitation

Conference Location : Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Conference Dates : August 16-17, 2022