

## Aging Challenges in a Digital World

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### Editorial

If it takes a village to raise a child, then creating a special issue needs a small metropolis. (Tom Kelley, the Art of Innovation).

Like all of the innovation based researches, this special issue on **aging challenges in a digital world**, is very much a team effort. I would like to thank all of the authors who accepted my invitation and contributed to this special issue.

Our societies and patient populations are evolving very rapidly. People have a chance to live longer and doing more during their lives. This longer life is a real opportunity for humanity if we can provide healthy aging, prevention and innovative treatments. The new technologies (3D printer, virtual reality, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, e-health), medical and pharmaceutical sciences progress have contributed to increase life expectancy. Even though this demographic development is not really a surprise, societies and health care systems are not still well-prepared for managing Aging challenges. Prevention initiatives and improvement of the wellbeing of the older adults may have a positive impact upon sustainable health in later life. The prevention initiatives, new technological solutions and innovative treatments and formulations adapted to the elderly may also reduce the demand for costly health care services in later life. As a result, technological solutions have an important role to sustain the health and wellbeing for the aging population.

This special issue aims to shed light on some of the innovations for the aging population. We have defined 4 main axes:

### Innovation in formulation development for older people- Dr. Antigoni Papanastasiou and Dr. Lida Kalantzi

In this article, the researchers explore the importance of indicating a special need for innovative geriatric-friendly formulations. This requires dosing flexibility, swallow ability and overall manageability of drug products among other issues that have been identified as most important for geriatric patients and thus they should drive the design of therapeutic options for the geriatric population. Innovative geriatric formulations can solve the non-adherence problem among the elderly. According to this article, raising the importance of developing geriatric friendly pharmaceutical products along with the expanding market within EU, are expected to stimulate the re-engineering of existing products to address well documented unmet geriatric medical needs. Also the parallel advancement of Information technology (ICT) may also allow the inclusion of instruments that will provide real-time feedback such as tracking of adherence or objective symptom quantification, which will contribute to the concept of personalized medicine, with dose adjustments stemming from objective measurements.

### Aging in Resilient Communities: An Alpine Case Study

In this case study social, and societal innovations for the rapidly aging societies is discussed.

Here, Dr. Susan Riva (Creighton University) explores the experience of The Senior Living Lab, in Switzerland. This case study sheds insight into user centered approaches to innovation in community healthcare platforms addressing aging. In a film experience the social learning process of older people, searching for solutions and imagining a hopeful future of healthy aging was documented through narratives. The social learning process of older people, searching for solutions and imagining a hopeful future of healthy aging was documented through narratives. The case study in this article will serve to create a road map for healthy aging policy in Alpine regions. In this new story of Alpine Aging, the message is positive: Demographic change (Aging) can be perceived as an opportunity, enabling economic actors to benefit from the growing "Silver Economy".

### Current Practice in Low Vision Rehabilitation of Age-related Macular Degeneration

Here, we have an article by Marine Raphanel et al., from Sorbonne University related to innovation in medical solutions for the elderly.

In this research paper the researchers have explored the utility of using virtual reality as a tool for low vision rehabilitation training in patients with age-related macular degeneration. The particular advantages of a tool such as VR are many. First, this completely immersive environment can be customized to the individual's progress. For example, for patients hesitant to enter challenging scenarios (i.e., crossing a busy street) the environment can be graded beginning with easier conditions (no traffic) and increasing in complexity (more cars, other pedestrians, cyclists) as the patient gains confidence. This allows the therapist to coach the patient through these psychologically distressing situations.

The authors have investigated demographics and practice patterns of low vision rehabilitation providers in France, and identified barriers to the creation, development, dissemination, and implementation of virtual reality (VR) technology in low vision rehabilitation clinical practice. One of the problems is that training in low vision rehabilitation is not a required component of orthoptic curriculum and it is thus offered at the school's individual discretion. Due to this lack of standardization, patients have no way of knowing whether their provider is trained in low vision rehabilitation. The development of an effective, validated, and standardized training protocol for AMD patients that transfers to real-life conditions is an important goal of low vision rehabilitation practice. As a solution the authors suggest pre- and post- therapy assessment of visual capabilities in order to standardize and assess the effectiveness of such training.

## Japan and its Rapid Ageing Society: Does e-health Technology Provide a Solution?

In this article which is an opinion paper, Dr Susanne Brucksch from German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo, discussed the case of Japan and its rapidly aging society, the question is: Does e-Health technology provide a solution?

In this article the author argues that a rapidly ageing society like Japan will rely heavily on technological solutions to ensure adequate care and a decent standard of living for elderly people. Thus, the country is predestined as a case study considering the relationship between ageing, professional care, e-health technology and other assistive devices. The author uses examples from Tele-health networks and monitoring sensor systems to shed some light on these recent and growing developments in the field of e-health technologies.

Other important subjects are recommended to investigate, the subjects like Aging and climate change, the impact of climate change on healthy aging. Another important subject is Aging and environmental challenges, how an aging population can contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and wellbeing all around our planet by providing their insight, wisdom and experience.

The importance of Aging challenges in a digital world is now becoming a permanent subject of reflection, research and analysis. Many EU and international projects are created around that subject, this special issue is our contribution and we hope that this issue can stimulate new initiatives and improve the current perception of Aging; we hope that Aging is not considered as a burden but as a new opportunity.

This article was originally published in a special issue, entitled: "[Aging Challenges in a Digital World](#)", Edited by Dr. Fereshteh Barei, Paris Dauphine University, Paris, France.