



AGE Platform Europe

The voice of older persons at EU level



Self-management and empowerment through technology: enablers and barriers for older adults

C3 Cloud Final Conference

28 August 2020

AGE Platform Europe

The voice of older persons at EU level



AGE Platform Europe is a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ in Europe

We aim to voice and promote the rights and wellbeing of older people, and to raise awareness about the issues that concern them most.



<https://www.age-platform.eu/>



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These policy areas are:

- Human Rights and non-discrimination
- Quality long-term care and fighting elder abuse
- Gender equality in old age
- Age-friendly environments & accessibility
- Employment and active participation
- Adequate income and social inclusion
- Consumer Rights
- Healthy ageing

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Self-management and empowerment

“What needs to happen is for doctors to come down off their pedestal and for patients to get up off their knees,” said Robert Johnstone of the International Alliance of Patient Organizations at the First European Conference on Patient Empowerment held in Copenhagen, Denmark on 11–12 April 2012.

→ We rely and use **technology** to create a new dynamic through which patients and citizens are empowered and can self-manage their health.



Why do older people not take up technology to self-management their own health and be empowered?



Technology?



Older adults?



Environment?

- **Heterogeneous group:** Older persons are not a uniform target group. They are individuals with diverse needs, wishes, lifestyles and expectations.
 - Were the **needs** clearly assessed?
 - Were older people **involved** in the design (stage A to stage Z) of such technology?
 - Were older people asked if they wanted a medicalised lifestyle?



➤ Ageism

ageism noun

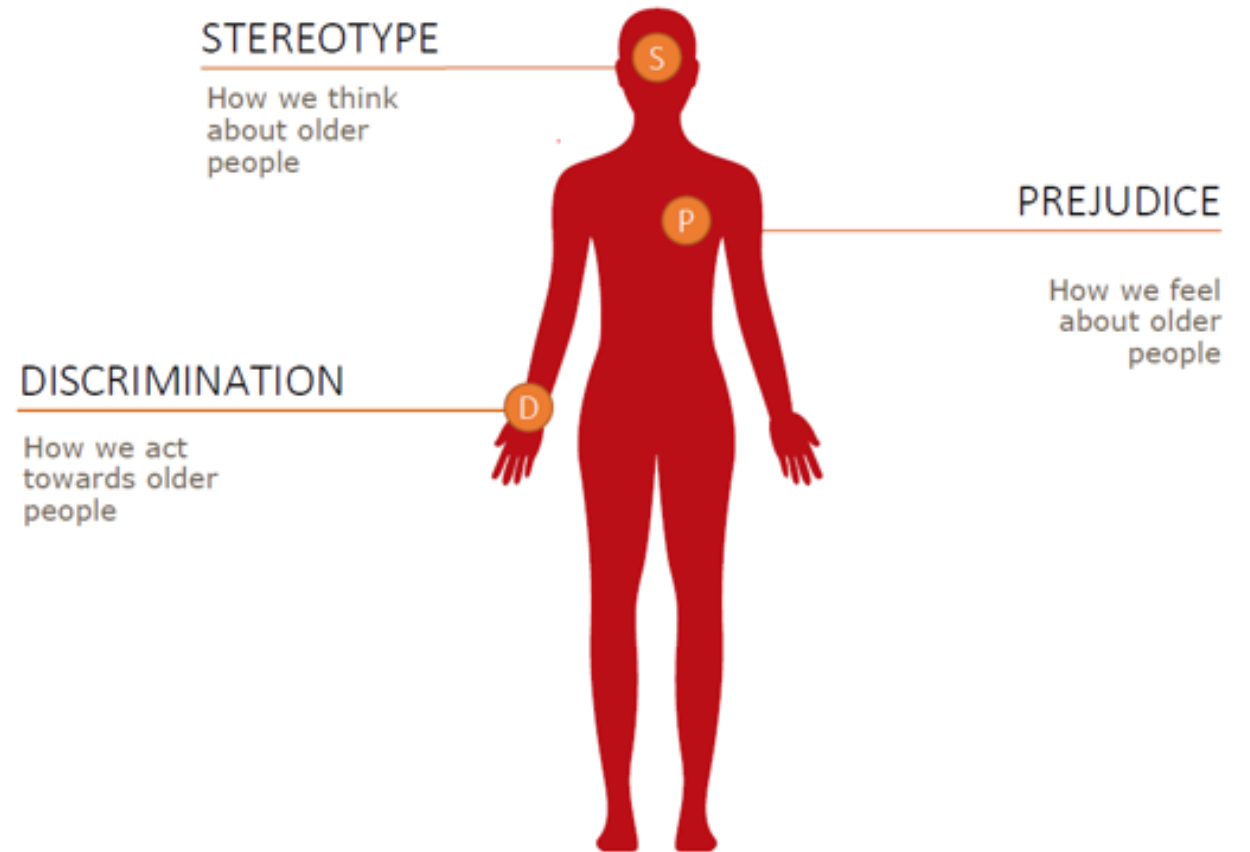
🔖 Save Word

age-ism | \ 'ā-(,)ji-zəm 🔊 \

variants: *or less commonly* **agism**

Definition of *ageism*

: prejudice or discrimination against a particular age-group and especially the elderly



- **Ageism:** Implicit ideas about older adults as users are reflected into the developed technology
 - We think of older adult in terms of illness, dependency and decay
 - We think of them as straightforwardly technologically illiterate and ignorant.
 - We undermine their opinion because we know better: “users who show an initial reluctance and resistance to new technology, but whose resistance and reluctance can be overcome” → the resistance of older users is not taken seriously

➤ Affordability:

- The cost remains one of the most important barrier for technological uptake
- Repartition of costs among the individual, the state and the private sector

« My life has changed since I became a pensioner. My total monthly resources amount to 600 EUR. I live near the city centre and a housing allowance covers my rent. My resources do not allow me to do what I want. »

Personal testimony in « Older people also suffer because of the crisis » Nov 2012.

➤ Accessibility:

- can older people easily use these new technologies?
- Is it user-friendly?
- Is on-going training planned?
- Who will provide the training?
- Is long-term technical support envisaged?
- Were the target users consulted on how to make it more accessible?
- Were their feedback taken seriously?
- Can older people have access to the internet? (e.g. rural areas)



➤ Health Literacy:

- Heterogenous population of older adults = heterogenous health literacy
- What is envisaged to increase the health literacy among older people? (e.g. partnership with local NGOs, social services, local governments, GPs...)

➤ Stigmatisation:

- Is the technology stigmatising them as dependent and frail?

➤ Real life conditions:

- Has the technology been observed in real life conditions?
- Are older users already using similar devices/solution? (duplication can create stress)

Recommendations by Rosa Kornfeld-Matte (the United Nations (UN) Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons):

- Assistive technologies foster autonomy and independence but **should not increase social exclusion**
- To avoid creating further inequalities, the **equal access** to assistive technologies must be ensured to all older people
- Equally important is to give older persons **the choice to accept or refuse** the technological support proposed to them (any other alternative?)
- Further human rights requirements imply that older persons **keep control over information** that will be collected through technologies
- The use of these technologies **should not replace human care** and do not substitute States' obligation to support older people

To keep an eye on ...

The **German Presidency of the EU** is planning the adoption of Council Conclusions on Human Rights, Participation and Well-Being of Older Persons in the Era of Digitalisation – planned for 13 October.



Source

- **How can the digital transformation serve the public interest? Civil society publishes joint EU Manifesto**
<https://www.age-platform.eu/policy-work/news/how-can-digital-transformation-serve-public-interest-civil-society-publishes-joint>
- **Assistive technologies and robots: AGE welcomes the new UN Independent Expert's report and call for a human-rights approach**
<https://www.age-platform.eu/special-briefing/assistive-technologies-and-robots-age-welcomes-new-un-independent-expert%E2%80%99s-report>
- **Ageing Equal Campaign** <https://ageing-equal.org/>
- **WHO, Patient empowering,** <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/pages/news/news/2012/4/empowering-patients>
- **Home Sweet Home Project** https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/ICT_for_ageing_well.pdf
- Alexander Peine, Ingo Rollwagen, Louis Neven, ***The rise of the "innosumer"—Rethinking older technology users***, *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 82 (2014) 199–214
- Sebastiaan T.M. Peek, Eveline J.M. Wouters, Joost van Hoof, Katrien G. Luijkxb, Hennie R. Boeijed, Hubertus J.M. Vrijhoef, ***Factors influencing acceptance of technology for aging in place: A systematic review***, *international journal of medical informatics* 83 (2014) 235–248