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Evolving welfare by use of information technology in ageing outlying villages.

The target of this research is to examine and analyze welfare services and the role and opportunities of technology in the development of service systems and forms of co-operation in outlying villages in the areas of rural Lapland. **The aim** is to provide information on prerequisites and conditions on how to produce welfare services in every-day-life in outlying villages by using technology. In addition, one target is to produce information on how to keep older citizens aware and involved in the global development of using welfare services produced with the help of information technology. Moreover, a crucial question is how to motivate older people to use services produced by information technology.

Information technology has a significant role in developing welfare services to elderly people especially in rural areas, such as Lapland. Technology is seen as a mean to ensure accessible and good quality services in every part of the country. However, a crucial condition for any extensive use of technology by citizens's in their everyday life is that the solutions and applications are user friendly, i.e. easy to access and easy to use. It's the way to support older people's participation and autonomy by means of technology^{1,2}.

In Finland, especially **In Lapland**, the main problems are ageing and diminution of the population³. As a consequence, the social structure of population is changing. It's a fact that also welfare services are going to centralize to cities and in centres of municipalities^{4,5}. This has undermined the possibilities to live in small villages in remote areas. Services are more difficult to reach albeit the need of services has increased at the same time. The possibility to **participate** is the key point in developing the information society. This means that people who are living in outlying villages accept and above all are willing to use new solutions in welfare producing welfare services. The theoretical framework is formulated from Niklas Luhmann's ecological communication theory⁶. The functions in every level are specific and autopoietic, but on the other hand there are related to each other. Every functional system can effect only on its own function and only via that every system has influence on the other function systems in the society. The information produced in this research can be used locally and in the whole country but also internationally, especially in rural areas. The results have relevance also to confirm older people's position in information society.

The connection to PhD_ACT-learning forum

In this forum I have my focus on ethical issues on doing research in small villages. This theme is relevant in every study and dissertation, but especially in doing research in small villages. There are not so many inhabitants in those villages and that causes some very specific themes to be reckoned with. Those are f.ex. how you choose your informants, how to guarantee their anonymity and the last but not the least there is the issue on researcher's own position, her/his preconceptions and attitude or might I say stance.

References

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