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A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF EHEALTH INTERVENTIONS FOR HEALTHY AGEING

Healthy ageing (HA) refers to active engagement with life, optimal cognitive and physical functioning and low risk of disease that enables older people to participate within their limitations and continue to be physically, cognitively, socially and spiritually active. As the use of information and communication technologies increases among older adults, ehealth could represent an effective means to promote HA. However, the evidence regarding ehealth interventions for HA is sparse. This systematic review aims to provide a synthesis of the effectiveness of ehealth interventions for supporting HA. Following the Cochrane Collaboration methods, we conducted standardized searches in 8 bibliographic databases to identify experimental and quasi-experimental studies evaluating the effectiveness of ehealth interventions for HA. We included any type of ehealth interventions targeting adults aged 50 or more, living in the community or in an institutional arrangement. We excluded interventions targeting a specific pathology, people with terminal illness, hospitalised in-patients, or older adults with severe impaired cognition. Outcomes of interest were: wellbeing, quality of life, activities of daily living, leisure activities, knowledge, social support, skill acquisition and healthy behaviours. Two reviewers independently assessed studies for inclusion and extracted data using a standardised tool. The searches identified a total of 7039 publications, of which 60 were kept for further assessment. From these, we included 11 studies (described in 17 papers) that met all inclusion criteria. Five studies were conducted in the USA, and the remaining six in Europe. Three studies assessed the use of computers and social networks in everyday life. They found no effect on cognitive function, depression, activities of daily living, well being and quality of life, but some effects on executive function, social contacts, and learning. Eight studies focusing on mobile and web-based health promotion interventions found mixed effects on physical activity and diet. No adverse effects were reported. There is some evidence of the effectiveness of ehealth interventions to improve the physical dimension of HA. However, most studies have important limitations, such as small samples and high attrition rate. In conclusion, support for the effectiveness of ehealth interventions to promote healthy ageing is still needed given the limited number of rigorous studies published.

Biography

Marie-Pierre Gagnon is Full professor at the Faculty of Nursing, Laval University and researcher at the Research Center of the Centre Hospitalier de Québec-Université Laval. Since 2012, she has held the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Technologies and Practices in Health. Her research program focuses on the evaluation of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health, organisational and individual determinants of ICT adoption and integration in the healthcare system, patient and public involvement in health care decisions, systematic reviews and best practices in knowledge translation and application.

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