Internet-use and psychosocial health status among older adults in Western Finland
(Samband mellan internetanvändning och hälsostatus bland äldre i Västra Finland)

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Background

- Effects of ICT\(^1\) and Internet-related developments have increased the research interest in the influence of ICT use on psychosocial (psychological and/or social) health and wellbeing on both an individual and societal level

- Research focusing on Internet use, or non-use, among older adults is still scarce, especially research with a focus on psychosocial factors

- The presented study is a part of the @geing Online project (focusing on the potential for utilizing the Internet in the promotion of older adults’ wellbeing)

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1 Information and Communication Technology
Research questions & Data material

- Are there differences between older Internet-users and non-users in Western Finland when comparing their emotional, social, and physical health status?
- Are eventual differences associated with Internet use for different purposes?

- Data used from the 2014 wave of the Western Finland Mental Health Survey was utilized, with 1097 respondents aged 65 to 80 years
- The frequency of internet use among 65-80 year-olds: 57.5 % (n = 631)
Analysis

- Logistic regression analysis (internet use or non-use as outcome)
- Predictor variables:
  - emotional, social, and physical health status
    (Short Form Health Survey, SF-121)
  - socio-demographic variables
    (gender, age group, marital status, and educational level)
- Post-hoc multinomial regression used to analyse associations with different internet activities (controlling for socio-demographic variables)

Results & Conclusions

- Internet use associated with emotional health status (OR 0.58 (0.39-0.86), 95%CI), not physical or social health status, when controlling for soc-dem. variables
- Internet use for hobby/entertainment (OR 1.68 (1.02-2.76), 95%CI) and work/study purposes (OR 2.37 (1.03-5.49), 95%CI) associated with a better emotional health status

- Results highlight ICT and Internet use as one of the evolving societal determinants which may complicate, support or protect older adults’ psychosocial health
- The potential use of the Internet in promoting and maintaining psychosocial health among older adults should be further explored
Thank you!

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