INTERNATIONAL MinD CONFERENCE 2019

DESIGNING WITH AND FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA
Wellbeing, Empowerment and Happiness

Editorial Notes

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Designing with and for people with dementia: wellbeing, empowerment and happiness

With ca. 10.9 million people affected by dementia in Europe, with numbers set to double by 2050 (Prince, Guerchet and Prina 2013), with 20 million carers, and with no cure in sight, research into care to improve the quality of life of people with dementia is essential, to encourage and enable them to engage in activities that are in line with their interests and experiences (Alcove 2013; Alzheimer's Society 2013).

Characterised by progressive memory and cognitive degeneration, people who are affected by Alzheimer's disease or other dementias often face cognitive, behavioural and psychosocial difficulties, including impairment and decline of memory and changes in identity (Alcove 2013). As a result, many have reduced physical activities or social engagement, or are unable to work. Emotionally, this can lead to uncertainty, anxiety and depression and a loss of sense of purpose.

In this light, it is becoming increasingly apparent that it is not just care that is required but support for how to live well with dementia, whether in one's own home or in residential care. This includes managing one's own care and everyday tasks, as well as leisure activities and social engagement. Even small things such as whether and when to go out or what to wear can have important effects on people's sense of self and wellbeing, contentment and happiness. Key to this is having choices and the ability to decide. Acknowledging the agency of people with dementia and understanding what can be done to support this is therefore a key question.

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Design-based non-pharmacological interventions are increasingly recognised as having great potential to help. Design can offer novel ways of complementing care and independent living to empower people with dementia in everyday situations because of its ubiquitous nature and its affordances. Much focus has so far been on physical and cognitive tasks and on safe-keeping and reducing risks. For example, design can help accomplish physical tasks and offer guidance or reminders, e.g. for time or orientation, or alert to behavioural changes. While there are some approaches towards emotional and social aspects of living with dementia, more could and should be done to enable people to live well with dementia and to acknowledge their agency.

Design can help to support social, leisure and creative activities. It can help empower people with dementia through offering choices and aiding decision-making. Design can support the individual person, or change the environment. This can take the form of a product, of systems or services, of the built or natural environment. The importance is to use design to help reduce stigma and exclusion, and instead to improve well-being and social inclusion to create happiness.

While the aims may be clear, the way to achieve them still raises many questions about the best approaches and methods to achieve such aims. The International MinD conference 2019 therefore seeks to explore the manifold areas and approaches. This includes novel theoretical approaches, novel methods in design development or in working with and including end-users, or the development of novel products, environments, services or systems. It also includes novel ways of working, collaboration and co-operation. The key aim is to bring together and explore how we might impact positively and sustainably on the personal, social, cultural and economic factors within our communities to improve living with dementia.

About this publication

This book includes the text parts of design proposal presentations as well as academic papers of the International MinD Conference held in Dresden, Germany, in September 2019. Academic papers are marked with the Bachelor's hat icon (🎓) and design proposals are marked with a pen (✎). The content of the special workshops held at the conference is not included in this volume.

The proceedings reflect a broad engagement with the field from a diverse range of researchers and practitioners from the various design and health disciplines, including product and interior design, craft, information and communication technologies, architecture and the built environment, psychiatry, psychology, geriatrics and others.

Together, the contributions offer an overview of how design – as a process and an outcome – can help to support people to live well with dementia as well as their relatives, carers and care professionals. We hope that these contributions also provide a better insight into how design and designers can be used and developed to do so. By offering these insights and

enhanced understanding, we hope to provide a better basis for collaborations between people living with dementia or designing for and concerned with dementia care to contribute to improving life for those living with dementia.

The conference website is www.mind4dementia.org. The complete proceedings with supplementary data are provided open access the QuCoSa server of the Saxon State and University Library Dresden (SLUB) at nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:14-qucosa2-353220.

References

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