

Leveraging Technology to Improve Care of Older Adults

In recent months, using technology in the care of older adults has become an imperative. As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) wreaks havoc around the globe, nurses are reminded of the vulnerability of older adults and compelled to think of innovative ways technology can be used to support these individuals. The complex care of older adults requires nurses to be informed, resilient, and adaptable to continually evolving circumstances. This special issue of the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* focuses on health technology to support care of older adults. A variety of technologies in different stages of development are presented. From assessment of information technology maturity in nursing homes to using sensors and telehealth devices, this issue presents timely studies with important implications for nurses.

Three feature articles in this special issue are related to remote monitoring of patients using sensors and telehealth applications (Despins et al., 2020; Guzman-Clark et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2020). As of April 30, 2020, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have amended existing laws or issued new declarations to expand the use of telehealth and mobile health during the COVID-19 pandemic (Center for Connected Health

Policy, 2020). With states shutting down non-essential services and, in some cases, issuing stay-at-home orders, eliminating barriers to telehealth to offer remote access to health care and reduce strain on hospitals and clinics has become a high priority. The articles herein cover the topics of evaluating adherence to in-home telehealth devices (Guzman-Clark et al., 2020), understanding how sensor systems can be tailored for use by older adults and their family caregivers to be used in the community (Robinson et al., 2020), and using innovative sensor signals for early detection of heart failure (Despins et al., 2020). In addition to these studies describing technologies designed to support older adults in the home, one article focuses on assessment of information technology systems in nursing homes facing unique challenges related to containment of disease and safety of residents (Powell & Alexander, 2020).

Together, the articles in this issue share a common goal of leveraging technology to improve care of older adults.

REFERENCES

Center for Connected Health Policy. (2020, March 27). *COVID-19 related state actions*. <https://www.cchpca.org/resources/covid-19-related-state-actions>

- Despins, L. A., Guidoboni, G., Skubic, M., Sala, L., Enayati, M., Keller, J. M., Popsecu, M., & Deroche, C. B. (2020). Using sensor signals in the early detection of heart failure: A case study. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 46*(7), 41–46. doi:10.3928/00989134-20200605-07
- Guzman-Clark, J., Yefimova, M., Farmer, M., Wakefield, B., Viernes, B., Lee, M., & Hahn, T. (2020). Home telehealth technologies for heart failure: An examination of adherence among veterans. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 46*(7), 26–34. doi:10.3928/00989134-20200605-05
- Powell, K. R., & Alexander, G. L. (2020). Qualitative validation of the nursing home IT maturity staging model. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 46*(7), 47–54. doi:10.3928/00989134-20200605-08
- Robinson, E. L., Park, G., Lane, K., Skubic, M., & Rantz, M. (2020). Technology for healthy independent living: Creating a tailored in-home sensor system for older adults and family caregivers. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 46*(7), 35–40. doi:10.3928/00989134-20200605-06

Kimberly R. Powell, PhD, RN

Bonnie J. Wakefield, PhD, RN, FAAN

University of Missouri, Columbia
Sinclair School of Nursing
Columbia, Missouri

Gregory L. Alexander, PhD, RN, FAAN, FACMI

Columbia University School of Nursing
New York, New York

The authors have disclosed no potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise.

doi:10.3928/00989134-20200605-01