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Technology in Dementia Care: An Analysis using the NASSS Framework

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

In recent years, Australia has been grappling with an alarming surge in dementia cases, which is the second leading cause of death nationwide and able to become the primary cause soon (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022). The scale of the issue is overwhelming, with over 421,000 Australians currently living with dementia, whereas the number is projected to be more than double by 2054 without significant medical breakthroughs (Dementia Australia, 2023). Distressingly, this trend has also extended to the younger demographics, with nearly 29,000 individuals experiencing early onset dementia, the figure is expected to climb substantially over the coming decades (Dementia Australia, 2024). The burden extends beyond those directly affected, with an estimated 1.6 million Australians involved in dementia care, underscoring the widespread societal impact of the condition (Dementia Australia, 2024). In addressing the complex challenges posed by dementia in Australia, Information Technologies play a crucial role in providing innovative solutions to support people living with dementia, their caregivers, and healthcare professionals (Bhargava & Baths, 2022). The rising prevalence of dementia has sparked a technological revolution in dementia care, with a focus on both patient-centric and caretaker-centric solutions. The patient-centric solution contains various technologies, such as wearable devices, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), interactive games and robots. Additionally, embedded sensors and health monitoring systems could be the major examples of caretaker-centric solutions (Bhargava & Baths, 2022). The absence of theory-driven research in current studies highlight a research gap in understanding the adaptability and adoption of technologies in dementia care. Hence, the aim of this study is to shed insights into the intersection of technology and dementia care using the lens of NASSS framework (Greenhalgh et al. 2017) which will examine theorizing and evaluating Non-adoption, Abandonment, Scale-up (e.g. local settings), Spread (e.g. application used in a new setting) and Sustainability (e.g. long-term use of an application) of healthcare technologies.

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