

ABSTRACT

The design of assistive technology is dictated by the narratives surrounding a particular impairment and its impact on one's life. This in turn affects the perceptions of the users – both the role of technology as well as their own sense of identity. In the case of those with a mild cognitive impairment, a precursor to dementia, home-based technologies that are disability and change focused shape the identity of the very people they are to help – reifying their dependency and their loss of self. With this study, we set out to better understand the narratives of people living with a mild cognitive impairment as well as their partners that live with them and provide care. Within this investigation, we uncovered the predominance of a disease-focused narrative – one that laments loss of identity and the struggles of daily care. However, we also uncovered a different narrative centered on the role of technology to provide support within the dyads' life. These technology narratives were evidence of a need to support the biopsychosocial aspects of autonomy for both parties and improved relationships. We use our findings to further discuss the driving force behind design goals for home-based technologies for those with a mild cognitive impairment.

SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this research to the WISH audience is to showcase the importance of interdisciplinary research. Gerontology and Human Centered Computing are seemingly two very different and multidimensional disciplines, yet both the intent and motivating behind their research is to further the quality of life and experience of the (older) person. Preserving the personhood and dignity of those with cognitive impairment by understanding their use of home technology may be of interest to the community.

STATEMENT

This submission does not conflict with the policies of the venue where the work was originally published or presented.