



Who defines the “smart” in “smart homes”? Developing a participatory research design for the evaluation of home monitoring for elderly citizens

For a large number of elderly citizens it is a fundamental need to live self-determined at home as long as possible. Technical assistance systems in so-called “smart homes” offer promising possibilities of support for this, since such technologies can, for example, measure and analyze vital parameters in a highly automated manner. Health problems thus can be detected and treated earlier, facilitating the independency and autonomy of elderly citizens as well as relieving their formal and informal caregivers. But besides such possible advantages there also are ethical, legal and social challenges, for example regarding data protection and privacy. To explore the developments in this field comprehensively, multi- and interdisciplinary research needs to be conducted including all dimensions of “smart homes” with the participation of their potential users.

The goal of this project is to develop an integrative research design for the evaluation of health-related home monitoring technologies. In particular, it will be investigated in how far principles of participatory research can be applied in this design, which is why the project will be accompanied by a citizen advisory board.

The project will be conducted by the Institute for History and Ethics of Medicine of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg together with the Dorothea-Erxleben-Lernzentrum and the chair for Healthcare Research – Nursing in the Hospital at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, as well as with the Center for Economics of Materials of the Fraunhofer Society and the Halle-Neustädter Wohnungsgenossenschaft e.G. (Ha-Neuer).

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