

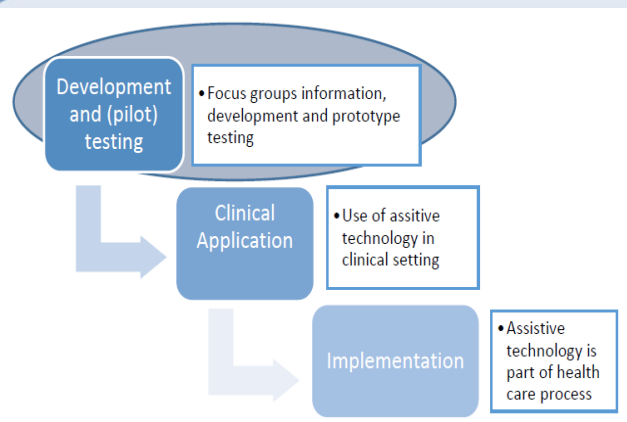
Identification of user requirements and attitudes towards assistive technology: a focus group study

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Background

Arm/hand function declines with age or due to acute diseases such as stroke, which may be mediated by assistive technology. To enhance the chance for uptake of assistive technology, end-users should be involved early during its development.

Objective

The main objective is to examine the barriers, opportunities and requirements of elderly and stroke patients for assistive technology targeted at physical support of arm/hand function during ADL and rehabilitation of the arm/hand.



Methods

Five focus groups were conducted with varying target groups. In total, 11 health care professionals, 4 stroke patients and 13 elderly (>60) participated. An interactive presentation with questions about arm/hand function problems and (dis)advantages of using assistive technology in ADL and arm/hand rehabilitation was held to stimulate discussions between participants.



Results

The participants specified many requirements regarding practical issues, the design and usability of assistive technology (see Figure 1). However, all participants only want support for the particular function(s) that need(s) assistance.



Figure 1. Device requirements

Conclusion

All participants considered assistive technology useful to support ADL or rehabilitation of the arm/hand, if the device is easy to use, comfortable to wear and only supports the function(s) that need(s) assistance, without taking over his/her own function completely.



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