Home Modification Information Clearinghouse

HMinfo | EBEP

Newsletter

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the first instalment of the HMinfo Newsletter for 2021.

The HMinfo team would like to wish everyone a bright and promising New Year 2021!

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. 2021 brings new beginnings, new opportunities, and even more challenges! For the HMinfo Clearinghouse, 2020 closed with bidding farewell to Prof. Bridge who retired from her active role as a professor in UNSW. For all of you who know Prof. Bridge, you will probably expect that she cannot really retire. Katy has been awarded the position of Emeritus Professor in UNSW and will continue to be the leader of the Enabling Built Environments Program (EBEP) and the heart and soul of HMinfo.

With big shoes to fill, I will be the director of the HMinfo Clearinghouse from 2021. In November 2017, Katy gave me the opportunity to work as the main researcher for the clearinghouse, and ever since I have been investigating, learning, and writing about home modifications and the role of the built environment in the lives of people of any level of physical or mental ability.

Prof. Bridge has taught me a lot, but there are a couple of things that will guide my journey as the HMinfo director. The first is that all the information produced by the Clearinghouse should originate from research. That does not imply that HMinfo members should perform original research on every topic relevant to home modifications. That would take such a long time that the contribution to our audience's knowledge would be negligible. The Clearinghouse has the great responsibility of "translating" research so that it becomes widely available and understood by consumers, carers, and health professionals, who do not have the time to follow the latest scientific advancements.

The second guiding principle for Prof. Bridge's work has been that "one size does not fit all". Standardized recommendations might work for some but when it comes to the care and the environment of the most vulnerable members of our community, personalized approaches are required. Katy has tried hard to make governments, politicians, and organisations realise that and the work of the Clearinghouse is based on that principle.

Back to our website's new content, a few days before the end of 2020, we uploaded the Evidence-based review related to the self-assessment of the person-environment fit. We consider this review an important one for different types of audiences: for service providers, as they can find the main assessment tools for the

mobility or function and/or the home environment for older people and people with disability in one place; for consumers, who can find tools for the assessment of the risks in their home; for academics who can understand the topic and the related research opportunities. A respective Consumer Factsheet will follow in a few weeks.

Please do not forget to email us with opinions, questions, and suggestions about the HMinfo website and our publications at hminfo@fbe.unsw.edu.au.

All the best!

Konstantina Vasilakopoulou

NEW HMinfo RESOURCES

Evidence-based practice review: Self-assessment tools for person-environment fit

This factsheet aims to explore and determine the existing self-assessment tools or the tools that can be transformed into self-assessment tools of functional ability and the appropriateness of the home. Older people and people with disabilities have decreased functionality in the home compared to people without disabilities. Assessments of their functionality as well as of their home environment can lead to the prescription of home modifications and/or assistive technology that can improve their quality of life in the home. During periods of self-isolation and physical distancing, self-assessment tools can prove valuable for the preservation of the health of the tenants as well as the health professionals.
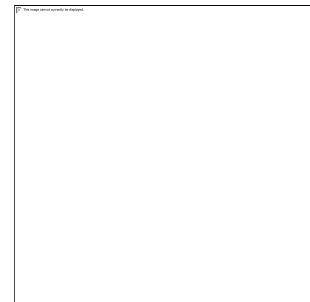
Systematic research through the HMinfo Library, Google Scholar, and Standard Electronic Databases was performed and 36 publications were retrieved. 8 studies were analysed and included in the review. Only one tool (CASPAR) was found to fulfill all requirements for a self-assessment tool of the person-home fit. A Telehealth version of the tool seems to be more effective in providing the necessary information for Occupational Therapists to be able to prescribe home modifications. A self-assessment tool for the person-home environment fit should be developed and scientifically tested, utilizing existing tools elements.

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Recent HMinfo RESOURCES

Occasional research paper: PDF Accessibility Report

This report aims to highlight the accessibility of the documents found on four different organisations' websites. The purpose of this is to highlight the accessibility issues found in PDFs hosted on the internet and what these issues mean for users

with disabilities. This report is useful for both document creators and managers who wish to better understand the components of an accessible PDF and how to assess their own document creation processes.

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Occasional research paper: Web Accessibility Audit

Web accessibility is aimed at allowing access for all on the internet. This means following the relevant guidelines and standards to ensure that barriers are not placed in front of potential users. The aim of this audit is to evaluate the websites of four different organisations in terms of web accessibility. This audit is then used to highlight common errors with respect to web accessibility and what these may mean for users.

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Occasional research paper: Web Accessibility Guide

Web accessibility is governed by standards and best practice methods that aim to provide access to all potential users of a website. These standards are often not requirements for website design and are often ignored. This guide aims to provide a useful tool to allow web designers and owners to evaluate their websites for accessibility and explains many of the common pitfalls with respect to web accessibility. The guide makes use of both the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the Usability Guidelines to inform best practices and allow users to make informed choices regarding their own particular needs.

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Occasional research paper: Writing Accessible PDFs Using Word

This guide to writing accessible PDFs in Microsoft Word is provided to give users the tools to make their documents accessible to a wider audience. It is intended for anyone who creates PDF documents for public use, using Microsoft Word as the document creator and who is familiar with that software. While the focus is on Microsoft Word the principles outlined in the guide may be applied to other document creation software at the user's discretion.

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Other RESOURCES

The needs of older people receiving home care: a scoping review.

Dostálová, V., Bártová, A., Bláhová, H. et al. The needs of older people receiving home care: a scoping review. Aging Clin Exp Res (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40520-020-01505-3

This journal article is a scoping review aiming to investigate the needs of older people who receive professional home care due to illness or frailty, as perceived and expressed by the older people themselves and their informal carers. The study reviews 15 articles. It is found that older people consider the following six areas as challenging:

- coping with illness;
- autonomy, including loss of privacy when receiving home care, reduced ability to perform daily tasks, and being able to make decisions for one's life;
- relationship with professionals/carers;
- quality, safe and secure care;
- loneliness and changes in social life and
- environment, which demonstrates older people's need to age in place.

The authors conclude that older people can express their needs and desires and their opinions, as well as those of their informal carers, should be considered when designing a strategy for their home care. This will lead to tailored home care with better outcomes for older people and their families and carers.

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Smart home and communication technology for people with disability: a scoping review

Rebecca Jamwal, Hannah K. Jarman, Eve Roseingrave, Jacinta Douglas & Dianne Winkler (2020) Smart home and communication technology for people with disability: a scoping review, Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, DOI: 10.1080/17483107.2020.1818138

This scoping review seeks to identify the effect of assistive technology, and most specifically of smart home and communication technologies, on the independency, quality of life, or health-management of people with disability and/or complex needs. 21 studies were reviewed and the impacts of the use of assistive technology were grouped in six broad domains: physical health, psychological impacts, level of independence, social relationships, environment, and spirituality. The article highlights that smart home and communication technologies have a significant impact on independence and participation. Particularly ICT and social media contribute to increased social participation and engagement. Various concerns related to cybersecurity and privacy using assistive technology are also raised. The authors conclude that the adoption and use of assistive technology should be guided by the person's expressed needs and respect for their life goals and expectations.

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Disability considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak

WHO reference number: WHO/2019- nCoV/Disability/2020.1

The World Health Organisation, recognising the greater risk of people with disability during a virus outbreak such as COVID-19, published a document with actions that if taken by the various stakeholders, the impact on the vulnerable population can be reduced.

The reasons why people with disabilities are more vulnerable to an outbreak like the one we are currently experiencing are numerous. People with disabilities might not be able to clean their hands as efficiently, keep the necessary distances, or access healthcare facilities to receive therapies or medication.

The publication provides useful information that can be applied by:

- People with disability and their households,
- Governments,
- Health-care providers,
- Disability service providers
- Institutions,
- The community.

It is important for people with disabilities to continue receiving the care they need under any circumstances. Service providers can assist and information about alternative options for communication and therapy.

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EVENTS

National Disability and inclusion Conference - Brisbane

Presented by The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) in partnership with the Department of Education, Queensland.

Featuring experts and leading practitioners in the field of disability and inclusion, the Conference will focus on the ways in which educators can ensure that all students access and engage in learning.

Presentations will explore how system leaders, school leaders, and teachers can work together to ensure schools are inclusive environments; how students with disability can contribute to their own learning; and how schools can work effectively with parents, families, and the wider community to ensure they are involved in their child's education.

The Disability & Inclusion Conference offers educational leaders the opportunity to engage with experts and peers and continue the conversation around disability and inclusion so that every student can achieve success at school.

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