

Socially Assistive Robots to Enhance Occupational Therapy Intervention: Toward Inspiring Change in Practice and Innovating Futures to Support Social Participation and Connection in Older Adults

Levasseur, M.¹⁻², Caron, M.¹⁻², Lussier-Therrien, M.¹⁻², Fdil, M.^{1,3}, Létourneau, D.^{1,3} & Michaud, F.^{1,3}

¹Université de Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada; ²Research Center on Aging, Québec, Canada; ³Interdisciplinary Institute for Technological Innovation, Québec, Canada



Socially assistive robots (SAR) in occupational therapy (OT)

- Labour shortage¹ + limited resources² → rethink intervention³
- SAR → meet rehabilitation + social needs⁴ → ↑ efficacy & quality of healthcare, autonomy of clients & caregivers⁵
- SAR rarely studied in OT, especially with older adults (OA)

Objective

- Describe how SAR: 1) have been used in OT & 2) can support social participation + connection with OA

Methods

Scoping⁶, followed by 2 action research^{7,8} studies with 22 key informants

- one with science-fiction movie excerpts
- another with 6 OA living in an independent living facility who interacted twice for 30 minutes with a SAR (T-Top)



Results

- 17 papers reviewed
 - ✓ Majority (n=7; 41.2%) focused on occupational development, mainly with OA (e.g., singing group or maintaining occupations)
 - ✓ Dissatisfaction = fear of technologies + lack of stable internet connection
- Action research with OA
 - ✓ All appreciated talking with T-Top & showed positive emotions (e.g., joy or surprise)
 - ✓ Primary purposes: daily companion + stimulation & entertainment
 - ✓ Health conditions, living situations & social participation = primarily influenced both needs + potential uses of T-Top (Figure 1)



Results

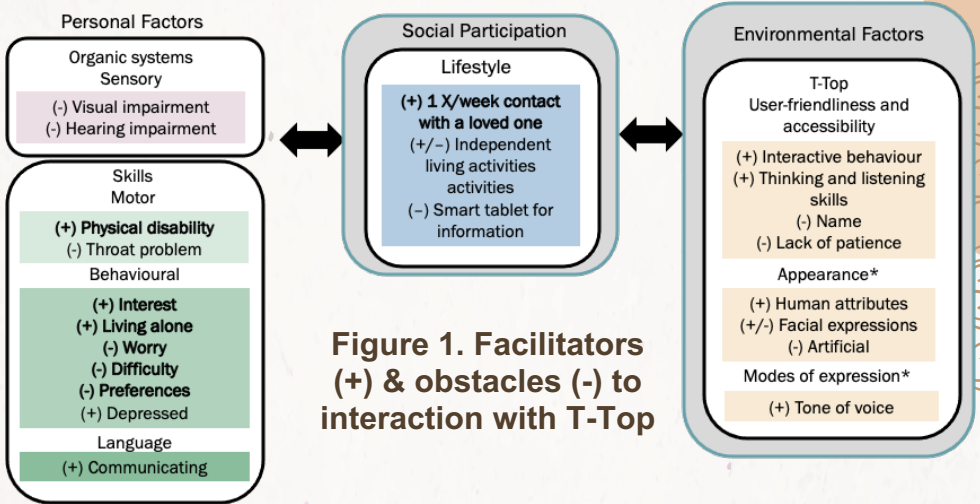


Figure 1. Facilitators (+) & obstacles (-) to interaction with T-Top



“We talked about several subjects. You get the impression he’s alive, the way he looks at you. Yes, I liked that experience.” (P6)

- 16 other key informants
 - ✓ Ease of use, warm interaction & appearance avoiding confusion between robots and humans = important

Discussion & conclusion

- SAR’s communication, thinking & reasoning
 - rapidly evolving but should be personalized to users’ needs, preferences & habits to facilitate interactions
- SAR can help innovate to support social participation & connection in OA + help them live longer & healthier lives

Thanks !
Question? Comments?
Scan the QR code!

