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ABSTRACT 97

More healthy elderly with e-Health?!

A research in a rural milieu of Portugal: Castelo Branco

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Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) seem to be affecting the boundaries between the private and the public spheres. Most developed countries are in the midst of two significant societal trends: one is an Aging Population, and two is the pervasiveness of ICT in social life. The elderly are the fastest growing demographic group; and even though their use of ICT is increasing, there is still a significant age-based digital divide. This paper presents the main results of a post-doc research conducted in a rural area of Portugal: Castelo Branco. Castelo Branco is located in the central interior of Portugal near the border with Spain. Portugal is a country with a high rate of aging and Castelo Branco has one of the highest rates of aging of the country. In addition to this, the older population of rural Castelo Branco area lives in general in isolated areas with poor access to some central city. For this purpose, a questionnaire was conducted involving a sample of 600 elderly over 65 years to assess their skills and digital needs. Similarly, respondents were attending physicians of health centers in order to ascertain what their views on the potential of ICT in general, and e-health for the elderly. In terms of final comments, we will present some proposals to reduce the percentage of info-exclusion of the elderly and to implement e-health as a way to promote active aging is appropriate.