What technology developers and prescribers need to know: Perspectives of people living with dementia and their caregivers.

Background/aim: While the development of technology aiming to help people living with dementia and their care partners is rapidly growing, there is concern about the quality and suitability of this technology. There is a lack of confidence in health professionals about supporting technology use. As part of a project co-developing technology with people living with dementia, a qualitative study was undertaken. Participants were interviewed about their experiences with technology and perspectives on currently available options, and what is needed. Eight people living with dementia and 11 care partners participated in audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews. The transcribed interviews were analysed using interpretive description. Preliminary results follow.

Findings: Participants described a variety of experiences with technology, ranging from reluctant, necessary use to developing their own innovative technology-based strategies. The use of technology reflected the person’s identity, life history and recent experiences. Technology was perceived as having a role in supporting connection, maintaining control and facilitating participation, fun, learning, memory and safety. Participants emphasised that its introduction should use existing skills but not bring extra demands. Properties of currently available technology that made it difficult or unacceptable to use were noted.

Overall, there was great hope for technology, and participants identified personalised wishlists of technology that would assist them. Concern about technologies were reported in terms of usability, ethics and the potential for it to be used to replace supporting people, rather than facilitate connection. Participants expressed the particular need for personalised, easy to use and transparent technologies, reflecting people’s interests, roles and values.

Word count: 250 words