

Louise Nygård, Ph.D.

Karolinska Institutet

Stockholm, Sweden

Design and Support Based on Knowing the Challenge of Skills and Technology

2009 Everyday Technologies for Alzheimer Care

While technology should have the potential to better the lives of people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or Alzheimer's disease, little is known about the potential of these people as users of technology. Their potential of learning to use new or customized technology or to maintain a competent technology use into the course of the disease has yet to be understood.

Louise Nygård, Ph.D., and colleagues will explore and compare strategies and potentials for learning and adaptation in technology use in people with MCI and people with Alzheimer's. The researchers will pinpoint what makes technology easy vs. difficult to use, and they will then design and introduce an easy-to-use videophone for people with Alzheimer's, taking into account their learning potential and self-initiated management strategies. Based on the results of previous research, a hierarchy of skills required for management of technology has been identified, ranging from easy to more challenging skills. In addition, the research team has constructed a hierarchy describing everyday technologies' level of challenge for older adults with and without cognitive impairment.

These findings will be studied further with the overall aim to provide new knowledge of how technology can be designed/customized and introduced to fit users with MCI or Alzheimer's.