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Novel and participative approaches to researching key concepts with older people

Researching with rather than for older people and advancing their perspectives and activity within research processes is increasingly recognised as a productive and effective approach. Most of the articles in this issue highlight the aspects of collaboration and older peoples' active and meaningful participation which can be seen to contribute to their actively developing novel research frameworks, measures and evaluation.

Evaluating the effects on neighbourhood social cohesion (NSC) of community living innovations to support ageing in place is the focus for the mixed methods study carried out by Hou *et al.* of two such "village" models in Florida aiming to promote connectedness and social support. Quantitative findings suggested one of the models was more likely to be associated with NSC, whereas qualitative findings appeared to confirm the importance for promoting village aims to connect. The study methods suggested different types of relationship-building available to villages to foster connectedness so as to foster residents' capacity to rebuild meaningful lives even after experiencing significant life disruptions.

Preventing falls in older people continues to be a topic requiring evidence to support choices of action and in which supporting older peoples' own views and actions are seen as important in mitigating falls risks and enhancing confidence. The study reported by Kooshiar *et al.* has compare agreement between and participants' preferences for two previously recommended measures of falls risk together with their usefulness for falls screening. The features offered by each are detailed, evaluated and compared in ways to help support researcher choices.

Similarly, foregrounding participation, so as to develop relevant policies and evidence "with" rather than "for" older people, is widely accepted. This trend is critically discussed and applied to proposing an evaluation tool in the paper by Raymond *et al.* recognising both the emancipatory personal processes and actions for social change that Participatory Action Research (PAR) can entail. This paper provides useful historical and methodological background that emphasises the work needed to ensure genuine and equitable participation by recognising and respecting diversity in effective community partnerships. This is examined using a detailed case study of developing and revising a PAR Evaluation Tool from the authors' PAR project in which both methodology and findings are comprehensively considered.

Innovations in technology are increasingly advanced as offering more efficient solutions to complexity and constraints in older adult care, to address frailty and multi-morbidities. But again, co-designing such advances is needed for solutions to better fit the needs of today's older people. Martin-Lucas *et al.* argue that the current evidence base indicates research is needed to understand how older people themselves engage with, adopt and use technology. Their paper reports a study in Spain with sample of 497 people aged between 60 and 94 years of the relationship between views, needs and experiences of using gerontechnology. Findings further indicate how important is co-creative research in developing and reviewing such innovation.

The close relationship between successful innovation and coproduction is further elaborated and then extended in the paper by Hemingway *et al.* reporting from a four-year EU-funded

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ten-site, four-country (France, Belgium, Holland and England) qualitative feasibility study of issues that can promote or constrain social innovation in co-producing with older people, interventions to stay active and independent. To promote more developed understanding of how findings relate to implementation, the researchers used a logic model to present findings from each site, making complex data sets more accessible and useable. Using these logic models informed both development and action and the authors note they can be more widely used to support social innovation-based research with older people, and to appreciate differences between groups and settings.

The conceptual paper by Naud takes a dynamic and transformative approach to ageing in place to argue for a multi-disciplinary “federative” framework for reframing the diverse life circumstances, trajectories and places of residence of older adults so as to combine action, research and policy and so promote “Aging All Over the Place”. Again, this stresses the collaborative nature of such enterprising actions to strengthen their supportive “circles of benevolence” wherever older people find themselves. This takes on board the notion of places as ecological and so encouraging communities and institutions to adapt to and so include diverse capacities, wishes and needs of older people, rather than expecting older people to be left to accommodate themselves to their circumstances of life and place.

A message emerging strongly from these papers is that active collaboration with older people within the projects, research and frameworks reported on or argued for here has promoted new approaches to be taken to reviewing and applying the key concepts being examined, from “place” to “risk” to “technology”.