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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that older people are considered as being not interested in technologies or as not having the physical capacity to use them^{1,2}. These negative stereotypes about older people's abilities to use technologies may prevent older people from actually using them³. Indeed, despite the increasing availability of new technologies for the benefit of older people, their use is currently extremely low.

AIMS

To explore the perception and use of new technologies by older people and to explore the impact of age stereotypes on using technologies by older people.

METHODS

Sample

- **N= 11.579 adults aged 40 to 90** : recruited through Walloon Mutualities ("Solidaris", "Mutualités Chrétiennes", "Mutualités Libres")
- 53% men and 47% women

Procedure

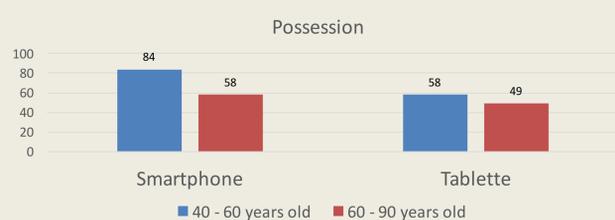
- **Participants answered to an online survey that included:**
 - Socio-demographic information
 - Questions about the use of technologies (i.e., tablet and smartphone)
 - Questions about the difficulties when using these technologies : participants selected the reasons explaining their difficulties when using the technologies.
 - The French version of the « Attitudes to Aging Questionnaire » (AAQ ; Laidlaw et al., 2007).

Statistical analyses

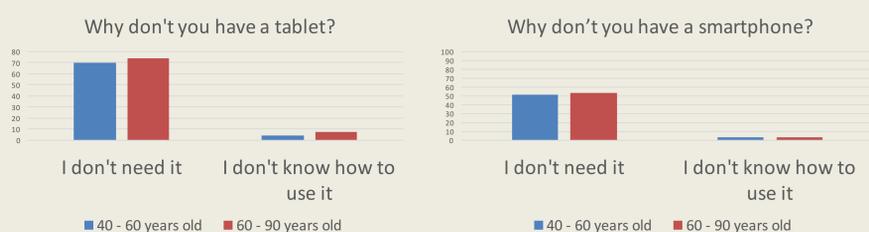
- Chi-squared tests and multiple regressions analyses were used.

RESULTS 1

- Regarding the use of technologies, older people use the smartphone and the tablet significantly less frequently than younger people ($p < 0.01$).

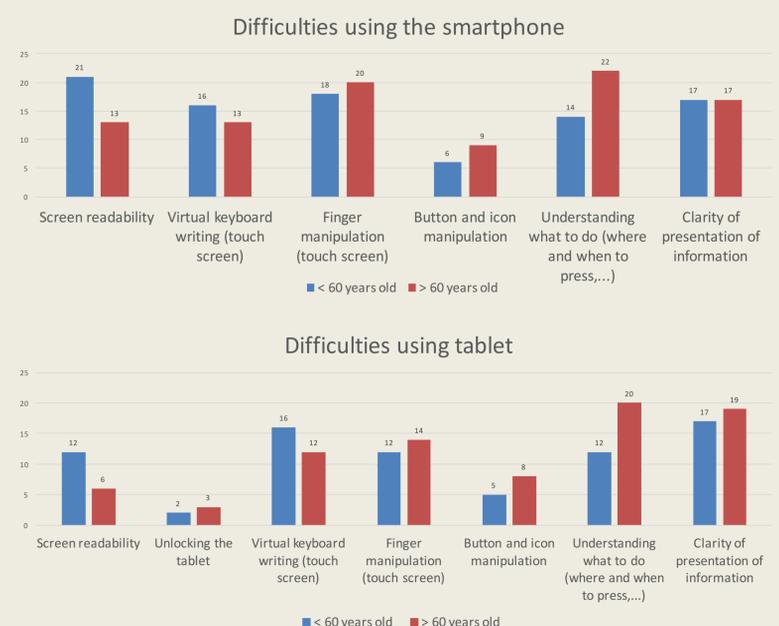


- Interestingly, the main reason for not using the technologies is not the inability to use the technologies but rather the fact that people do not perceive them as useful.



RESULTS 2

- Among all older people using smartphones and tablets, the difficulties reported when using the technologies are relatively variable. Indeed, for each possible source of difficulties, less than one senior in five indicates that they have this difficulty with the device. We cannot therefore consider that a particular difficulty is present in the majority of older people. These difficulties are even less present when using the tablet.



- In addition, the difficulties that can significantly ($p < 0.01$) increase with age are generally related to the ergonomics of the device (i.e., touch screen manipulation, button and icon manipulation, and understanding what to do) and not to a problem of sight (i.e., readability of the screen) or fine motor skills (i.e., writing with the touch keyboard).

RESULTS 3

- Multiple regression analyses also showed that attitudes toward aging significantly influence the use of technologies, even after controlling for perception of utility, age, sex, health status and diploma ($p < 0.01$).
- In particular, people with more negative attitudes are less likely to use technologies.

Conclusion

- Our data suggest that older people have the physical capacity to use new technologies and that age stereotypes can negatively influence the adoption of technologies by older people.
- These results highlight the importance of considering the impact of stereotypes and of offering personalized and customizable technologies that take into account the actual needs of older people.

REFERENCES

1. Wandke, H., Sengpiel, M., & Sönksen, M (2012) - Gerontology, 58, 564-570
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3. Lagacé et al. (2015) - Journal of Technologies and Human Usability, 11(4), 1-13