

Technologies for Active and Independent Living in Old Age

Press Release

February 12, 2021, Prague

„We will stop all aging until 2030,“ said Petr Šrámek at the eng(aging)! conference.

The fourth edition of the international conference on population aging called *eng(aging)!* took place virtually on February 10-11, 2021. More than 400 participants and speakers from more than 15 countries took part in this online event. The conference was attended by many world-renowned experts including the Director of the Institute of Successful Longevity, Neil Charness, Ken Sagawa, a Researcher Emeritus at Japan's National Institute for Modern Industrial Science and Technology, the Deputy Director of the International Institute of Ageing at the United Nations, Rosette-Farugia Bonello and the Director of the Singapore Center for Healthy Ageing, Brian Kennedy.

In times of pandemic, modern technology played a crucial role in the lives of the elderly, not only in maintaining social contact. Technology undoubtedly represents a powerful tool that keeps elderly people in touch with their loved ones. Pandemic experience has also led us to recognize **how useful telemedicine can be**, said Rosette Farrugia-Bonnelo (The International Institute of Ageing at the United Nations). But she also reminded us that not all older people have equal access to the Internet and can afford the appropriate IT equipment. Many of them consider technology too complex. Andrew Sixsmith (director of the Canadian AGE-WELL Network) talked about the Covid-19 measures which sent most of the old people into the **social isolation that threatens not only their well-being but also their overall general health**. According to Sixsmith, participation in community activities is very important for mental health.

Jaroslav Lorman (Director of Life 90) also drew attention to the limits of modern communication technologies. **"Loneliness is not just the absence of physical contact. The substitution in the form of technology is simply not enough. The personal contact over the video calls is not that spontaneous, and you can feel that,"** Lorman said. According to Lorman, technologies that are complementary to social and health services need much greater support.

The issue of digitization of health care and the potential of telemedicine also came to the fore thanks to the Covid-19 experience. Particularly the need for strict social distancing has shown how efficient remote medical examinations can be for chronically ill patients. **"80% of the Polish society is ready to use telemedicine.** However, the problem lies in the lack of PR communication, which creates significant barriers for implementation," said Kaja Zapadowska-Kling (Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz).

With technology, we can support and maintain our cognitive abilities, such as memory. **"People who exercise their memory by means of digital engagement are more likely to have better memory assessments,"** said Corina Ilinca (University of Bucharest). Neil Charness

(Director of the Institute of Successful Longevity, Florida) then highlighted that " Technology products hold considerable promise for rehabilitating, argumentation and substituting for age-related negative changes. However, learning rates slow with age. It is harder and harder to make information for older adults."

On the second conference day, **Petr Šrámek** (founder of LongevityForum.eu) informed us about the latest research in the field of "longevity" and the possibilities of science to extend a healthy and active part of our lives. **"Until 2023 we can be sure that we can slow down some aspects of aging, from the year 2026 we can slow down all aspects of it and until 2030 we will stop all aging..."**, concluded Šrámek.

As Stefan Schürz (LIFEtool, Austria) has pointed out, we certainly can extend a healthy and active part of our lives by our regular physical activity. "However, **71 % percent of women and 70 % of men in Europe in the 55+ age group never or seldom exercise or do sport,**" he said. He also added that "it is not a man that needs to adapt to technology. It is a technology that needs to adapt to man."

In his presentation, Ken Sagawa (National Institute for Modern Industrial Science and Technology/ Japan) **stressed the importance of basic standardization of technological products that will not in any way disadvantage the elderly or disabled.** He introduced a successful Japanese model and the basics of the ISO standardization. Although we should not forget that people in health care will never be completely replaced by technology - the human factor is the fundamental center of this field.

The conference, which took place under the auspices of Jana Maláčová, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, and Milena Johnová, Councilor for Social and Health Care, City of Prague, was co-organized by the [Centre for Active Ageing](#) and the [KEYNOTE company](#).

The partners of the conference were the [International Visegrad Fund](#), [JTI](#), [The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands](#) in Prague, and [MEDDIhub](#).

Important links: [Program](#), [List of speakers](#), [Registration form](#).

The working language of the conference is English.

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About the project

The 4th international conference is organized in the frame of the long-term (eng)aging! The project, which aims to foster society-wide debate about the accelerating demographic change and population aging. The project aims to stimulate a constructive discussion about these trends and to look for ways to make use of them for the benefit of society. The 2021 edition will be held fully virtually.