



The 1st International Online Conference on Societies

21-23 January 2026 | Online

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Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring

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Dr. Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco
Dr. Patrick Devlieger

Dr. Roda Madziva
Prof. Dr. António B. Moniz

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Welcome from the Chair

Dear the societies community,

I am truly honored to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you on behalf of the organizing committee of the 1st International Online Conference on Societies, which will be hosted online and promoted by the open access MDPI journal *Societies* (ISSN: 2075-4698; IF 1.6).

The overarching aim of this gathering is not merely to convene a group of individuals but to assemble a constellation of esteemed experts from every nook and cranny of the globe. These are the brilliant minds who are actively engaged in the fascinating and ever-evolving field of sociology. They come from diverse academic institutions, research centers, and professional backgrounds, each bringing with them a unique set of experiences, perspectives, and insights that are as rich and varied as the societies we study.

In today's interconnected world, the field of sociology plays an increasingly crucial role in understanding the complex social dynamics that shape our lives. It delves into the intricacies of human behavior, social institutions, cultural norms, and the forces that drive social change. By providing this online conference, we hope to create a vibrant and inclusive space where ideas can flow freely, where knowledge can be shared without the constraints of geographical boundaries, and where meaningful conversations can take place.

Particular attention will also be given to young scientists entering the world of sociology in order to stimulate their participation in discussions on the topic.

Throughout the conference, we aim to cover—among others—the following topics:

- S1. The Social Nature of Health and Well-Being;
- S2. Disabled People/People with Disabilities (Non-Medical Coverage);
- S3. Sport/Leisure/Recreation/Tourism;
- S4. Equity/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- S5. Science and Technology.

Once again, welcome to IOCSO 2026. I look forward to a stimulating and rewarding experience for all of us.



Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring
Conference Chair

Community Rehabilitation and
Disability Studies, Cumming
School of Medicine, University of
Calgary, Calgary, Canada



Societies (ISSN 2075-4698) is an interdisciplinary journal that brings together different scientific approaches to engage with societal questions to enhance our understanding of the social realm throughout history. The journal publishes original empirical research papers, literature reviews, and conceptual papers. Our aim is to publish papers that are of significant impact on addressing present and emerging societal questions. Therefore, we encourage researchers to publish their results in as much detail as possible. For empirical research papers and literature reviews all experimental details must be provided, so that the results are reproducible. We also encourage the publication of timely theoretical pieces on topics of interest to existing and emerging societal questions. Papers are either published in the open journal or in Special Issues devoted to specific topics of interest to the field.

Impact Factor: 1.6 (2024); **5-Year Impact Factor:** 1.9 (2024)

Session Chairs



Dr. Katie Aubrecht

Department of Sociology, St.
Francis Xavier University,
Antigonish, Canada



**Dr. Michele Filippo
Fontefrancesco**

Department of Sociology,
Università Cattolica del Sacro
Cuore, Milan, Italy



Dr. Patrick Devlieger

Department of Social and
Cultural Anthropology,
University of Leuven,
Leuven, Belgium



Dr. Roda Madziva

School of Sociology and Social
Policy, University of Nottingham,
Nottingham, UK



Prof. Dr. António B. Moniz

Observatory of Technology
Assessment, CICS.NOVA,
Campus Campolide, Lisboa,
Portugal; Faculty of Sciences
and Technology, University Nova
Lisbon, Campus Caparica,
Caparica, Portugal



Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring

Community Rehabilitation and
Disability Studies, Cumming
School of Medicine, University
of Calgary, Calgary, Canada

Keynote Speaker



Prof. Dr. Nicola Magnavita

Department of Safety and
Bioethics, Catholic University of
the Sacred Heart, Roma, Italy

Invited Speakers



**Prof. Dr. Delfín
Ortega-Sánchez**

Department of Specific
Didactics, Faculty of Education,
University of Burgos,
Burgos, Spain



Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring

Community Rehabilitation and
Disability Studies, Cumming
School of Medicine, University
of Calgary, Calgary, Canada



Prof. Dr. Orr Levental

Department of Physical
Education, Tel Hai University,
Upper Galilee, Israel



Prof. Dr. Trudo Lemmens

Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of
Law, University of Toronto,
Toronto, Canada

Program at a Glance

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Morning	Session 3. Sport/Leisure/Recreation/Tourism Session 5. Science and Technology	Session 4. Equity/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Flash Poster Session
Afternoon	Session 2. Disabled People/People with Disabilities (Non-Medical Coverage)	Session 1. The Social Nature of Health and Well-Being	

IOCSO 2026 Program

21st January 2026 (Wednesday)

Session 3. Sport/Leisure/Recreation/Tourism

Time: 09:00 (CET, Basel) | 03:00 (EST, New York) | 16:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CET Time	Speaker	Title
9:00–9:10	<i>Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring</i> <i>Opening Remark from Conference Chair</i>	
9:10–9:40	Prof. Dr. Orr Levental Dr. Michal Ben-Eli Invited Speakers	Understanding Physical Activity Engagement Among Young Autistic People: Social Context, Motivation and Inclusion
9:40–10:00	Louis Moustakas Selected Speaker	Whose Cohesion? Community Voices on Sport, Exclusion, and Marginalization
10:00–10:20	Alicia Martínez Moreno Selected Speaker	Beyond the Game: The Contradictory Logics of Sport
10:20–10:40	Barbara Mazza Selected Speaker	SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AS AN ATTRACTIVE LEVER FOR A SPORT TOURISM EVENT: THE CASE OF RUNNING

Session 5. Science and Technology

Time: 10:40 (CET, Basel) | 04:40 (EST, New York) | 17:40 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CET Time	Speaker	Title
10:40–10:50	<i>Prof. Dr. António B. Moniz</i> <i>Welcome from the Session Chair</i>	
10:50–11:10	Ioannis Zervas Selected Speaker	DigComp and Its Limits: New Human Resource Management Constructs for Generative AI Skills
11:10–11:30	Ehsan Baha Selected Speaker	Letters of Care: Educating Clinicians for Caring Design in the AI/Hybrid Era
11:30–11:50	Isabella Corvino Selected Speaker	Technology and hope: AI potential in healthcare

Session 2. Disabled People/People with Disabilities (Non-Medical Coverage)

Time: 14:00 (CET, Basel) | 08:00 (EST, New York) | 21:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CET Time	Speaker	Title
14:00–14:10	<i>Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring</i> <i>Welcome from the Session Chair</i>	
14:10–14:40	Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring Invited Speaker	Ability judgment concepts: A gift from the disabled people community to the academic community and society at large
14:40–15:10	Prof. Dr. Trudo Lemmens Invited Speaker	Death as Therapy in Canada's 'Assisted Dying' Regime: A Threat to Disability Rights
15:10–15:30	Gabriela Stefkova Selected Speaker	Easy-to-read communication for cancer screening in people with intellectual disabilities: The Slovak perspective
15:30–15:50	Abdelrahman Elsayw Selected Speaker	A Proposed Guideline for Adapting School Track and Field Events for Students with Physical Disabilities in Alignment with International Standards
15:50–16:10	LIJA JACOB Selected Speaker	Multilingual and Region-Specific Image Captioning and Contextual Scene Recognition using Transformer-Based Architecture for Inclusive Technology Design for Visually Impaired

22nd January 2026 (Thursday)**Session 4. Equity/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion****Time: 09:00 (CET, Basel) | 03:00 (EST, New York) | 16:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)**

CET Time	Speaker	Title
9:00–9:10	<i>Dr. Roda Madziva</i> <i>Welcome from the Session Chair</i>	
9:10–9:40	Prof. Dr. Delfín Ortega-Sánchez Invited Speaker	Social Representations of Teaching Controversial Issues in Secondary Education: A Study with Pre-Service Teachers from a Central Core Theory Perspective
9:40–10:00	Juan Brea Iglesias Selected Speaker	“They’re not listening to me”: An analysis of epistemic injustice from the perspective of mental health activism in Spain
10:00–10:20	Alba Meroño Asenjo Selected Speaker	“Just Show Me, Don’t Do It for Me”: Characterizing Effective Informal Support for Older Adults Digital Learning
10:20–10:40	Rocío Blanco-Gregory Selected Speaker	Labour Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Tourism Sector: A Systematic Review from a Sociological Perspective
10:40–11:00	Xi Jiang Selected Speaker	The “Silver Digital Divide” and Intergenerational Support Mechanisms among the Elderly in the Era of Artificial Intelligence
11:00–11:20	Iye Ogbe-Dibia Selected Speaker	“AFRICA- THAT’S NOT MY NAME”: NAVIGATING HYBRID IDENTITIES AND INCLUSION FOR RECENT AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE US SOUTH FROM A DECOLONIAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE
11:20–11:40	Eliud Kiprop Selected Speaker	Understanding Regional Disparities in Foreign Migration Across Japan: A Hybrid Laplacian Diffusion-Gravity Approach

Session 1. The Social Nature of Health and Well-Being**Time: 14:00 (CET, Basel) | 08:00 (EST, New York) | 21:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)**

CET Time	Speaker	Title
14:00–14:10	<i>Dr. Katie Aubrecht</i> <i>Welcome from the Session Chair</i>	
14:10–14:40	Prof. Dr. Nicola Magnavita Invited Speaker	Eating Disorders in the Workplace
14:40–15:00	Gintarė Vazonienė Selected Speaker	Women’s subjective well-being – a micro-level analysis for Poland and Lithuania
15:00–15:20	Elena Fusar Fusar Poli Selected Speaker	Ethical Mapping of Agricultural Arenas: Wellbeing, Equity, and Sustainability in the Ebro Lands
15:20–15:40	Sultana Ali Norozi Selected Speaker	Integration and Belonging Through Relationships: Immigrant Youths’ Experiences of Community-Based Mentoring
15:40–16:00	Davide Costa Selected Speaker	The ‘Cinderella Disease’ Reconsidered: A Qualitative Study on Health Professionals’ Perception of Chronic Venous Disease through the Lens of Medical Humanities
16:00–16:20	Florence Akumu Juma Selected Speaker	Perceptions of psychotherapy among African Caribbean and Black Identifying (ABCI) young adults in Southwestern Ontario: Towards an exploration of best practices in psychotherapy
16:20–16:40	Guilherme Welter Wendt Selected Speaker	Understanding Sexual Abuse Risk: A Brazilian School-Based Study

23rd January 2026 (Friday)*Flash Poster Session***Time: 09:00 (CET, Basel) | 03:00 (EST, New York) | 16:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)**

Session	Poster Presenter	Title
Session 1		
9:00–9:10	Calla Glavin Beauregard	Detecting sub-populations in online health communities: A mixed-methods exploration of breastfeeding messages in BabyCenter Birth Clubs
9:10–9:20	Liviu Tatomirescu	Understanding Dementia through Caregivers' Experiences: Behavioral Challenges and Quality of Life
9:20–9:30	Suzana Turcu	Wellbeing of Cancer Caregivers: Scoping Review
9:30–9:40	Klaudie Němečková	Continuity of care for children with mental health problems: experiences of children, parents and social workers
9:40–9:50	Adriana Rodrigues Machado	Umuarama Circular: Social Transformations in the Construction of a Circular City
9:50–10:00	Zhaoyang Xie	Gender specificity of teachers' stress sources and health problems: evidence from a network analysis
Session 2		
10:00–10:10	Ashmita Singh	Immersive Virtual Reality for Peer Support in Spinal Cord Injury: A Qualitative Pilot Study
Session 3		
10:10–10:20	ELENI ROMPOTI	Human Resource Management and Labor Relations in Tourism and Cultural Enterprises: Evidence from Crete
10:20–10:30	Miloş (Ilie) Constantina Alina	From Risk to Resilience: A Bibliometric and Systematic Review of Tourist Loyalty and Sustainable Tourism in Coastal and Post-Pandemic Contexts (2020–2025)
10:30–10:40	Mariana Floricica Călin	Psychological Values and Attitudinal Predictors of Sustainable Tourism Consumption
10:40–10:50	H. Antonio Pineda-Espejel	Motivation and intention to perform physical activity in secondary-school students
Session 4		
10:50–11:00	SABRINA BELLAFRONTE	Precarious empowerment on TikTok: gendered digital informality and the paradox of new survival economies
11:00–11:10	Pariya Parchini	Immersive Behavioural Assessments for Autistic Job Seekers: A Protocol of a Participatory Approach to Autism-Inclusive Hiring Practices
11:10–11:20	Elitsa Dimitrova	Equal in Sharing, Unequal in Care: Social Differences in Attitudes toward Shared Parental Leave in European Societies
Session 5		
11:20–11:30	POLYDORA ANNA ELENI	Digital and Social Ethnography: The Case of Youth Digital Platforms
11:30–11:40	Jingsheng Wang	Super AI Evolution Theory: Algorithmic Competition and Civilizational Risk in the Data Colonial Era
11:40–11:50	Lisa D'Errico	A Scoping Review of Sociological Literature on Sex Dolls and Sex Robots (2000–2025)

Session 1. The Social Nature of Health and Well-Being

sciforum-147959: Continuity of care for children with mental health problems: experiences of children, parents and social workers

Klaudie Němečková

Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, České Budějovice 370 11, J. Boreckého 1167/27, Czech Republic

The paper presents the results of a qualitative study focused on the continuity of care for children and adolescents with mental health difficulties in the Czech Republic. The research is based on interviews with children (n=33), their legal guardians (n=4), and social workers (n=10), which were analyzed with an emphasis on the experiential perspective of the individual actors. The findings indicate that the system of care is fragmented, with long waiting times for professional help and insufficient availability of specialized services. Children describe repeated experiences of bullying, stigmatization, and misunderstanding within the school environment, which significantly contribute to their feelings of isolation and helplessness. Parents emphasize their sense of helplessness, administrative burden, and the lack of clear information about available forms of support. Social workers highlight, in particular, barriers to interdisciplinary cooperation and a shortage of capacities, especially in the field of child psychiatry and crisis services. Nevertheless, the presence of a key worker—often in the role of a social worker—proves to play a crucial role in ensuring continuity of support, coordinating services, and strengthening the family system. The experiences of children further confirm the importance of trust, a safe relationship, and an individualized approach that enables them to feel heard and respected. The paper underscores the necessity of systematically developing mental health centers for children, strengthening prevention, improving the availability of psychotherapy, and creating effective mechanisms for intersectoral cooperation between education, health care, and the social sphere. The findings may serve as a basis for innovations in social work, aiming at greater accessibility, comprehensiveness, and timeliness of support for children with mental health difficulties and their families.



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sciforum-152082: Social isolation as a risk factor for cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease

Maria Crina Isac

Department of Biology, Faculty of Biology, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, 700506 Iași, Romania

Physical social isolation is an increasingly evident challenge in modern society and can have significant effects on mental and cognitive health. Reduced in-person social interactions and limited participation in community activities restrict cognitive stimulation, affect emotional balance, and may contribute to cognitive decline. These changes increase the vulnerability of older adults to neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's disease. This paper employs an analysis of the scientific literature, selecting and synthesizing relevant studies published between 2015 and 2025 on the effects of physical social isolation on the cognitive health of adults and older adults. The analysis emphasizes social, psychological, and biological mechanisms, highlighting common findings across research and identifying factors that can be addressed through preventive interventions and cognitive stimulation strategies. At the biological level, the absence of regular face-to-face interactions can disrupt the stress response and negatively affect brain structures involved in memory and learning. Psychologically, feelings of loneliness and depression accelerate cognitive deterioration. From a social perspective, the lack of support networks and opportunities for intellectual engagement reduces cognitive resilience and increases exposure to additional risk factors. The findings highlight implications for public health and underscore the need for integrated strategies that promote social inclusion, community participation, and cognitive stimulation as effective and sustainable preventive measures. This approach emphasizes that physical social isolation should be recognized not only as an individual issue but as a significant and complex risk factor requiring coordinated policies, programs, and interventions to support the cognitive well-being of older adults.



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sciforum-155004: Bridging Attitudes and Practice: How Primary Care Nurses Approach Alcohol Consumption

Sara Diogo Gonçalves^{1,*}, **Lisete Morais**², **Maria Monteiro**^{2,3}, **Raquel Garcia Diogo**⁴
and **Ana Caramelo**^{2,3,5}

¹ Clinical Academic Center of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (CACTMAD), University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

² School of Health, University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

³ RISE-Health Research Network, Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, 4200-319 Porto, Portugal

⁴ School of Science and Technology, University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

⁵ Clinical Academic Center of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (CACTMAD), 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Introduction:

Alcohol consumption remains a significant public health problem due to its physical, mental, and social consequences. Nurses play a key role in identifying and managing alcohol-related issues in primary health care. This study aims to assess nurses' attitudes towards alcohol consumption and to reflect on the development of specialized nursing competencies.

Methods:

A descriptive, cross-sectional, and correlational study with a quantitative approach was conducted among 57 nurses working in the Functional Units of the Douro I – Marão and Douro Norte Primary Health Care Cluster. Data were collected electronically using the *Short Attitudes and Alcohol Problems Perception Questionnaire* (SAAPPQ) and the *FANTASTIC Lifestyle Questionnaire*. Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0, applying descriptive and inferential statistics, with a significance level set at p0.05.

Results:

Most participants showed an “agreeing” perception of attitudes and alcohol-related problems in the dimensions of appropriateness and legitimacy but a “disagreeing” perception regarding motivation and self-esteem. For the satisfaction dimension, perceptions were neutral. More than half of the nurses (54.4%) reported lifestyles that need improvement. A significant negative correlation was found between lifestyle and perceived adequacy in alcohol-related attitudes. Most nurses had not attended scientific events on this topic in the past five years.

Conclusions:

The findings highlight the importance of continuous education to strengthen nurses' skills and confidence in addressing alcohol-related issues. This study reinforces the relevance of community and public health nurses in promoting responsible, autonomous, and evidence-based interventions within primary health care. Although conducted within a specific regional context, the results may inform broader nursing education and policy initiatives aimed at improving alcohol-related care in similar primary health settings. Future studies should explore these associations across diverse healthcare systems to enhance the generalizability of these findings.



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sciforum-154231: Detecting sub-populations in online health communities: A mixed-methods exploration of breastfeeding messages in BabyCenter Birth Clubs

Calla Glavin Beauregard^{1,2,*}, **Parisa Suchdev**^{1,2}, **Ashley M.A. Fehr**^{1,2}, **Isabelle T. Smith**¹, **Tabia Tanzin Prama**^{1,2}, **Julia Witte Zimmerman**^{1,2}, **Juniper Lovato**^{1,2,3}, **Christopher M. Danforth**^{1,2,4} and **Peter S. Dodds**^{1,2,4,5}

¹ Vermont Complex Systems Institute, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, USA

² Computational Story Lab, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, USA

³ Department of Computer Science, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, USA

⁴ Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, USA

⁵ Santa Fe Institute, 1399 Hyde Park Rd, Santa Fe, NM 87501, USA

Parental stress is a nationwide health crisis according to the U.S. Surgeon General's 2024 advisory. To allay stress, expecting parents seek advice and share experiences in a variety of venues, from in-person birth education classes and parenting groups to virtual communities such as BabyCenter, for example, a moderated online forum community with over 4 million members in the United States alone. In this study, we aim to understand how parents talk about pregnancy, birth, and parenting by analyzing 5.43M posts and comments from the April 2017--January 2024 cohort of 331,843 BabyCenter "birth club" users (that is, users who participate in due-date forums or "birth clubs" based on their babies' due dates). Using BERTopic to locate breastfeeding threads and LDA to summarize themes, we compare documents in breastfeeding threads to all other birth-club content. Analyzing time series of word rankings, we find that posts and comments containing anxiety-related terms increased steadily from April 2017 to January 2024. We used an ensemble of topic models to identify dominant breastfeeding topics within birth clubs, and then explored trends among all user content versus those who posted in threads related to breastfeeding topics. We conducted Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling to identify the most common topics in the full population, as well as within the subset breastfeeding population. We find that the topic of sleep dominates in content generated by the breastfeeding population, as well anxiety-related and work/daycare topics that are not predominant in the full BabyCenter birth-club dataset.



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sciforum-150267: Ethical Mapping of Agricultural Arenas: Wellbeing, Equity, and Sustainability in the Ebro Lands

Elena Fusar Fusar Poli^{1,*} and Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco²

¹ Department of Gastronomic Sciences, University of Gastronomic Sciences, P.za Vittorio Emanuele II, 9. Fraz. Pollenzo, 12042 Bra, Italy

² Department of Sociology, University Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, L.go Gemelli 1, 20123 Milan, Italy

This paper explores the agricultural landscapes of the Ebro Lands (Catalonia, Spain) through the framework of ethical mapping in anthropology, which connects moral reasoning, embodied values, and ecological relations. This study aims to understand how ethical considerations, market dynamics, and ecological care intersect in shaping agricultural practices and the wellbeing of rural communities. It seeks to empirically trace how ethics operates within multispecies and socio-ecological contexts.

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic fieldwork, in-depth interviews with farmers, agronomists, and cooperatives, and survey data collected across the region. This integration of qualitative and quantitative sources allows for a nuanced understanding of how decisions concerning pesticide use, biopesticide innovation, or the preservation of ancient olive groves are negotiated across social, ecological, and institutional scales.

Findings show that agricultural choices are not merely technical or economic but also ethical gestures shaping both environmental and human wellbeing. Elder farmers associate moral value with continuity and discipline, while younger generations prioritize biodiversity and ecological care. Migrant workers, essential yet marginalized, reveal how inequalities affect collective health. Cooperatives and local institutions navigate between solidarity and market logics, mediating tensions that reverberate throughout the agroecosystem.

These dynamics generate what we conceptualize as a “perspectival carousel,” in which subjectivities, moral economies, and health practices continuously shift, collide, and realign. By mapping these ethical entanglements, this study highlights the interdependence of ecological, human, and social dimensions in imagining just and sustainable rural futures.



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sciforum-153414: Gender specificity of teachers' stress sources and health problems: evidence from a network analysis

Zhaoyang Xie and Jiali Huang

Center for Teacher Education Research, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China

Abstract

Background: Teachers' occupational health problems have attracted increasing attention from researchers worldwide, as they are closely linked to both teacher well-being and educational quality. Nevertheless, the specific mechanisms connecting stress sources and health problems unique to teachers remain insufficiently understood. In particular, little is known about whether these associations differ between female and male teachers. To address these limitations, the present study employed network analysis using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022.

Methods: A total of 2,092 teachers from Hong Kong were included in the analysis. Network analysis was conducted to explore the interconnections among nine identified sources of teacher stress and ten teacher health problems. In addition, gender-specific networks were estimated to examine potential differences in the structure and centrality of nodes between female and male teachers.

Results: The findings indicated that administrative tasks were the most salient source of stress in the overall network, while fatigue was the most prominent health problem. Gender differences emerged in both the central nodes and the network edges. For female teachers, administrative workload and fatigue were central concerns, whereas for male teachers, intimidation or verbal abuse by students and fatigue were central.

Discussion: These findings highlight the necessity of reducing administrative workload and implementing strategies to mitigate teacher fatigue. Moreover, gender-specific interventions are warranted to address distinct stressors and health challenges faced by female and male educators, thereby promoting teacher well-being and supporting sustainable educational development.



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sciforum-153506: Impacts of an intergenerational exercise program on urinary incontinence in senior and postpartum women

Emmanuella Osuji^{1,*}, Ashmita Singh¹, Emily Armstrong¹, Emily Nadon², Rylee Waugh³, Jane Schulz⁴ and Martin Ferguson-Pell⁵

¹ Rehabilitation Robotics Laboratory, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (Physical Therapy), University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

² Collegiate Sports Medicine and Elle physiotherapy, Red Deer, AB T4N 1R8, Canada

³ The Evergreens Foundation, Hinton, AB T7V 2A4, Canada

⁴ Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department), University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2R3, Canada

⁵ Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (Physical Therapy), University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

Introduction: Urinary incontinence (UI) is common across the female lifespan and is linked to diminished confidence, reduced participation, and social isolation. Access to care is especially limited in rural communities. Pelvic floor muscle training is effective, but delivery models often overlook the psychosocial burden of UI, particularly loneliness among older adults. We developed and piloted an intergenerational, group-based program with virtual clinical support to test and explore whether it could improve continence while also fostering social connection and reducing isolation for seniors.

Methods: A 12-week, single-cohort pre-post intervention was delivered at a supported-living lodge in Hinton, Alberta. Eight women with UI were enrolled (six postmenopausal and two postpartum); seven completed the program. Sessions (twice weekly) combined education (breathing strategies, the Knack, urge-suppression), supervised exercises, and home exercises. Virtual oversight used Zoom and a telepresence robot; content was iteratively refined via Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles. Outcomes included PFDI-20, PFIQ-7 questionnaires, and 3-week interval bladder diaries tracking voids, leak episodes, etc. Given ordinal scales and small sample size, descriptive summaries were used.

Results: Data were available for seven participants. Improvements were most frequent for frequent urination (5/6, 83%) and urgency leakage (4/7, 57%); stress-related leakage improved in 4/7 (57%). Bladder diaries indicated fewer leak episodes by week 12 with stable bowel patterns. Participants reported reduced reliance on incontinence products; some discontinued containment aids, and one stopped an overactive-bladder medication after consulting a clinician. PFIQ-7 domains most often showing improvement were physical activity, travel, and social participation.

Conclusions: This exploratory pilot study demonstrated that a low-cost, intergenerational program with virtual clinical support was feasible in a rural setting and associated with clinically meaningful UI improvements and perceived gains in function and confidence. Despite limitations (small sample and no control group), findings justify a larger controlled evaluation and suggest group-based, tele-enabled pelvic floor rehabilitation can expand access to conservative UI care in underserved communities.



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sciforum-149879: Integration and Belonging Through Relationships: Immigrant Youths' Experiences of Community-Based Mentoring

Sultana Ali Norozi

Department of Education and Lifelong Learning (IPL), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU),
7491 Trondheim, Norway

Abstract: The integration of immigrant and refugee youth in Norway entails navigating linguistic, cultural, and social challenges that can hinder educational attainment, wellbeing, and future opportunities. Research shows that community-based mentoring has emerged as a promising strategy to support immigrant youth in their adaptation processes. This study explores how immigrant youth participants in the Vinn Vinn project experienced and perceived the role of mentoring in their social integration and overall wellbeing in three municipalities. The project, initiated by the Human Rights Academy in collaboration with Save the Children Norway, paired young immigrants (aged 16-23) with volunteer mentors who shared similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Drawing on twenty two semi structured interviews and complemented by targeted observations of programme activities, the findings demonstrate that mentoring facilitated social belonging, improved language and cultural competence, reduced loneliness, and provided both emotional and practical support. Anchored in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the study highlights how mentoring created opportunities for positive interactions across micro- and meso-level systems, bridging individual needs with wider community and institutional structures. The article contributes to the scholarship on immigrant youth integration by showing how culturally responsive, community-based mentoring can complement formal welfare services and enhance wellbeing among young immigrants in Norway.



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sciforum-155200: Normalcy, Choice, Personhood: Characterizing Multidimensional Wellbeing in Two Congregate Memory Care Living Environments

Megan Kemper Strickfaden^{1,*}, Charlene Knudsen², Orsolya Welch³ and Joyce Thomas⁴

¹ Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences – Human Ecology Dept, University of Alberta, 17 University Campus NW, Edmonton, AB T6G 2G6 Canada

² Human Ecology, University of Alberta

³ Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci – Human Ecology Dept, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

⁴ Industrial Design, School of Industrial + Graphic Design, College of Architecture, Design and Construction, Auburn University, 207 Wallace Hall, Auburn, AL 63849, USA

Congregate living for memory care is complicated especially when considering how multidimensional wellbeing can be supported. Wellbeing is naturally linked to quality-of-life, a concept that's been studied from various perspectives and involves subjective and objective factors that have been represented through various frameworks. Further, quality-of-life is multidimensional as it relates to individuals, sociocultural contexts and networks, and environmental factors including people's interactions with and supports from objects and spatiality. The Stroud/ADI dementia quality framework was created to better understand how people with dementia might be better supported by considering a breadth of factors. Our study takes a deep dive into two longitudinal ethnographic studies of memory care congregate living environments, one in the Netherlands and the other in Canada. Collectively across these ethnographies, we engaged in in-depth observations across many years that were augmented by taking fieldnotes and photos, and capturing video; interviews with numerous staff, residents, family, and friends; and content reviews of websites, social media and other publicly facing information. The study herein examined video, photos, and interview transcripts through the Stroud/ADI framework to better understand quality-of-life in these two care environments. The results of this study illustrate how each care space has re-conceptualized traditional nursing home design environments including residents' sociocultural environment based on creating a home-like 'normal' environment and providing layered choices for residents that promote respect of personhood where residents' physical, psychological, social and emotional needs are 'met where they're at'. Through our analysis, five interrelated domains with subdomains emerged including: social and physical environment; quality of care and interdependence; personhood and individual choice; communication and connection; and health. While a perfect congregate care environment cannot exist, the details of our findings highlight how two very different memory care environments provide levels of normalcy, and choice that supports personhood through their designed environments.



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sciforum-149260: Perceptions of psychotherapy among African Caribbean and Black Identifying (ABCI) young adults in Southwestern Ontario: Towards an exploration of best practices in psychotherapy

Florence Akumu Juma ^{1,*}, Christiana Okyere-Folson ² and Fanis Juma ¹

¹ Martin Luther University College of Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Avenue West, Waterloo, ON N2L 3C5, Canada

² Youth & Child Services, Brock University, 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines, ON L2AS3A1, Canada

Research indicates that African, Caribbean and Black Identifying (ABCI) young people face barriers when accessing mental health services (Cénat, et al, 2025; Okusanya & Meyer, 2025; Finnigan, et al, 2022; Fante-Coleman & Jackson-Best, 2019; Galimore et al, 2023) including systemic, practitioner related, mental health literacy and discrimination. The current body of academic scholarship highlights a gap in empirical research focused solely on the perceptions of psychotherapy among this population. This community-based participatory action research study involves a partnership with **African Caribbean Wellness Initiatives (ACWIs)** in southwestern Ontario Canada and seeks to address this gap by including voices of young people who have engaged in psychotherapy. Transition from adolescence to young adulthood comes with expected as well as unexpected changes (Jankowiak, et al, 2025; Arnett, 2024, 2004; Mandarin, 2014; Steinbeck & Khon, 2013; Havighurst, 1972) including physical, psychological, and sexual changes through the transition into early adulthood. These changes, coupled with usual stressors of life transitions, can compound their emotional distress and even cause health crisis. Young people raised in households of new immigrant parents are more likely to experience intense emotional and psychological challenges that may require the assistance of health professionals like counsellors and psychotherapists. However, experience indicates that their perceptions of psychotherapy determine the effectiveness of the intervention. The study will include the participation of young people of ages between 18 and 29 years, who either migrated to Ontario, Canada as children or were born to newer immigrant parents and have lived/still live in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. The central aim of this community-based participatory action research is to explore perceptions of this distinct demography and advance best practices including considerations for an Afrocentric approach to psychotherapy which may lead to greater access to psychotherapeutic services.



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sciforum-155149: Quality of Life and Financial Burden in Congenital Heart Disease Care: A Large-Scale Survey of Pre- and Post-Treatment Outcomes in a Free Tertiary Hospital

Shadab Ahamad^{1,*}, Mahima Sharma¹, C Sreenivas¹, Gaurav Bhardwaj², Anagha Tulsi³ and Prachi Kukshal¹

¹ Department of Genomics Research, Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Research Foundation, Palwal, Haryana 121102, India

² Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani International Centre for Child Heart Care and Research, Palwal, Haryana 121102, India

³ Department of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery, Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani International Centre for Child Heart Care and Research, Palwal, Haryana 121102, India

Background: Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the most common birth defect globally, imposing substantial physical, emotional, and social burdens on affected children and their families. Although advances in pediatric cardiac surgery have improved survival, quality-of-life (QoL) outcomes, particularly in low-resource settings, remain underexplored. Free tertiary referral hospitals offer an opportunity to assess the impact of equitable access to advanced cardiac care.

Objective: To evaluate the QoL of families of CHD patients before and after intervention, with emphasis on psychosocial wellbeing and financial burden.

Methods: A hospital-based survey was conducted among CHD patients undergoing intervention at a free tertiary referral hospital in India between 2018 and 2025. A validated 20-item QoL questionnaire was administered preoperatively and at postoperative intervals, assessing physical functioning, emotional wellbeing, social integration, and financial burden. Responses were recorded using a four-point Likert scale (never-always) and analyzed using paired statistical methods (SPSS).

Results: Of approximately 12,500 interventions, 9,068 patients completed preoperative and 3,033 (33.4%) postoperative surveys; financial data were available for 6,716 (74.1%) families. Preoperatively, 71.1% reported significant physical, psychological, or social challenges, which declined to ~1% one month post-intervention ($p < 0.05$). Regarding financial capacity, without free treatment, 58.3% could not afford surgery, 26.4% would incur debt, and only 3.1% could fully fund care. Based on family income-treatment cost analysis, only 17.7% could cover up to 75% of total intervention expenses.

Conclusion: Surgical correction of CHD in a no-cost tertiary setting significantly improves QoL, extending benefits beyond clinical recovery to psychosocial and financial wellbeing. These interim findings underscore the impact of equitable access to advanced cardiac care in reducing hardship and promoting health equity, while acknowledging that the one-third postoperative response rate may introduce response bias affecting generalizability.



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sciforum-131595: The 'Cinderella Disease' Reconsidered: A Qualitative Study on Health Professionals' Perception of Chronic Venous Disease through the Lens of Medical Humanities

Davide Costa and Raffaele Serra

Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences, University Magna Graecia of Catanzaro, 88100 Catanzaro, Italy

Introduction: Chronic Venous Disease (CVD) is one of the most widespread yet institutionally underestimated conditions in contemporary healthcare. Despite its high prevalence and the significant burden it places on patients' daily lives, it is often perceived as secondary or purely aesthetic. This tension reflects broader dynamics in the social construction of medical legitimacy, where life-threatening conditions attract institutional focus, while chronic but non-fatal illnesses remain culturally and professionally devalued. **Methods:** This qualitative study draws on semi-structured online interviews with 20 vascular surgeons—each representing a different Italian region—to explore how medical professionals construct and navigate the social meaning of CVD in their practice. **Results:** Findings illustrate a profound mismatch between the systemic complexity of CVD and its marginal status within clinical and institutional discourse. While all participants recognize the chronicity, socio-economic burden, and psychological impact of advanced CVD (e.g., venous ulcers, bleeding, etc.), they also describe it as a “Cinderella pathology”—routinely overshadowed by more acutely framed arterial diseases. Surgeons report observing different patient behaviors: arterial patients act with urgency and fear, while venous patients often display resignation or delay care. These attitudes are influenced by systemic failures, including poor public health communication, limited primary care integration, and lack of policy support for preventive and long-term care—particularly in underserved areas. **Conclusions:** By foregrounding the lived experiences and reflections of health professionals, this study contributes to the sociological understanding of how chronicity, medical hierarchy, and institutional inattention coalesce to shape healthcare delivery. It calls for a reconfiguration of health priorities that values everyday suffering, promotes equity, and recognizes the silent yet substantial burden of CVD within broader societal systems.



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sciforum-153158: Umuarama Circular: Social Transformations in the Construction of a Circular City

Adriana Rodrigues Machado^{1,2,*}, **Beatriz Cervejeira Bolanho Barros**³ and **Julio César Guerreiro**⁴

¹ Associação CECOLAB-Collaborative Laboratory towards Circular Economy, Business Centre, Rua Nossa Senhora da Conceição, 2, 3405-155 Oliveira do Hospital, Portugal

² CBQF - Centro de Biotecnologia e Química Fina – Laboratório Associado, Escola Superior de Biotecnologia, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Rua Diogo Botelho 1327, 4169-005 Porto, Portugal

³ Department of Technology, State University of Maringá, Avenida Ângelo Moreira da Fonseca 1800, Zona A1, Umuarama, Paraná 87506-370, Brazil

⁴ Department of Technology, Post-graduate Program of Sustainability, Maringá State University, Ângelo Moreira da Fonseca Avenue, 1800 - Danielle Park, Umuarama 87506-370, Paraná, Brazil

Umuarama, in the northwest of Paraná, was founded on June 26, 1955 and completed 70 years in 2025. Despite its historical youth, it has consolidated itself as a regional center of development, with an economy based on agribusiness, commerce and services. Recognized as the "Capital of Friendship", it stands out for its modern infrastructure, good health, education, leisure and safety indicators, as well as quality of life for its inhabitants. Its cultural identity and strategic position in the Entre Rios region reinforce its attractiveness as a promising medium-sized city in southern Brazil. The study evaluates the urban development of Umuarama in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identifying advances and challenges. The circular city approach involves not only environmental and economic aspects, but also social inclusion, job creation in the circular economy, and community empowerment through sustainable public spaces. According to the Sustainable Development Index of Cities (IDSC-BR), Umuarama occupies the 325th position in the national ranking. Although it is not among the most sustainable, it already has practices aligned with the SDGs: health and leisure services (SDG 3), structured educational institutions (SDG 4), diversified economy that promotes decent work and growth (SDG 8) and green areas that support sustainable cities (SDG 11). The performance in the IDSC-BR indicates advances in quality of life, infrastructure and economy, but also reveals challenges in waste management, use of renewable energy and urban mobility. The municipality has favorable conditions and alignment with the SDGs, but needs to expand environmental policies to consolidate itself as a reference in sustainability.



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sciforum-152351: Understanding Dementia through Caregivers' Experiences: Behavioral Challenges and Quality of Life

Suzana Turcu, Cristiana Glavce, Monica Petrescu and Liviu Tatomirescu *

¹ Medical Anthropology Department, Francisc I. Rainer Institute of Anthropology, Romanian Academy, 050474 Bucharest, Romania

² Psychiatry Department, "C.F.2" Clinical Hospital, 011464 Bucharest, Romania

Background/Objectives: Dementia represents a complex syndrome in which biological, psychological, social, and cultural processes converge. Although its clinical features are well documented, less attention has been given to the lived experiences of patients and caregivers and their role in shaping illness trajectories. This study aimed to investigate risk factors, behavioral manifestations, and quality of life in dementia from an anthropological perspective, focusing on the interaction between comorbidity, cognition, lifestyle, cultural beliefs, and caregiving contexts.

Methods: A cross-sectional, observational study was carried out with family caregivers of individuals diagnosed with dementia who accessed specialized neurological and psychiatric care in Bucharest, Romania. Caregivers completed an anthropological questionnaire capturing socio-demographic data, comorbid conditions, lifestyle behaviors, relational dynamics, and cultural perspectives. Descriptive and inferential analyses examined associations between clinical, social, and cultural variables.

Results: Patients were predominantly older women living with multiple chronic conditions, most frequently neurological and cardiovascular. Cognitive impairment was more severe among individuals with lower levels of education and limited financial resources. Disturbances in appetite and sleep were common and frequently associated with diminished physical activity and reduced wellbeing. Disclosure of diagnosis elicited diverse emotional responses, with families describing processes of adaptation as ambivalent, nonlinear, and often marked by anxiety or sadness. Cultural beliefs and spirituality played a central role in shaping explanatory models and coping strategies, with reliance on religious practices, alternative therapies, and traditional interpretations frequently reported.

Conclusions: These findings suggest that dementia in this context is not solely a product of biological decline but is deeply embedded in socio-economic conditions and cultural frameworks. Addressing these intersecting influences through integrative, culturally responsive models of care may improve outcomes for both patients and caregivers.



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sciforum-151339: Understanding Sexual Abuse Risk: A Brazilian School-Based Study

Guilherme Welter Wendt

Department of Medical Sciences, Health Sciences Center, Western Parana State University, Francisco Beltrão Campus, Francisco Beltrão 85601, Brazil

Sexual abuse is a widespread issue in Brazil, and its effects are very damaging, if not irreversible, for victims. This type of violence is a deep-rooted, alarmingly widespread problem in Brazilian society, and the effects on lives can be extensive. Long-lasting effects may include psychosocial problems, with varying levels of intensity (for example, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or complex trauma), and physical issues that may range from chronic pain to reproductive concerns, or even chronic illnesses. For this reason, the current study explored predictors of sexual abuse in a nationally representative sample of students completing a school-based survey in 2019. Logistic regression models were developed using the following independent variables: age, gender, race, urban vs. rural, public vs. private, cyber victimization and traditional victimization by bullying. Findings indicated that age (16-17 versus younger; OR = 1.60, p .001), female gender (OR = 2.36, p .001) and indigenous and racial identities who identified as black (OR = 1.13, p = .003) or Asian (OR = 1.14, p = .045) increased the likelihood of sexual abuse. Findings also indicated students in public schools had higher odds of reporting sexual abuse (OR = 1.37, p .001) than private school students. Those who experienced cyberbullying (OR = 3.22, p .001) and school bullying (OR = 1.78, p .001) reported greater odds for sexual abuse than their non-bullied classmates. Aligning with both national and international studies, these results provide testimony as to the extent and prevalence of sexual abuse. Findings involving demographic and relational variables provide avenues for prevention, such as in identifying risk factors to take preventative measures for at-risk youth. Enhancements in accessing support services are needed, as well societal awareness regarding this form of traumatic violence experienced by youth.



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sciforum-152347: Wellbeing of Cancer Caregivers: Scoping Review

Suzana Turcu^{1,*}, Andrei Kozma², Luisa Preda³, Bogdan Danciu⁴ and Cristiana Glavce¹

¹ Medical Anthropology Department, Francisc I. Rainer Institute of Anthropology, Romanian Academy, 050474 Bucharest, Romania

² Research Department, Alessandrescu-Rusescu National Institute for Mother and Child Health, 020382 Bucharest, Romania

³ School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, 010071 Bucharest, Romania

⁴ Developmental and Cross-Cultural Psychology, Romanian Institute of Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, 050474 Bucharest, Romania

Informal caregivers are essential to cancer care, often shouldering complex emotional, physical, and logistical responsibilities. While caregiving can be meaningful, it is frequently linked to psychological distress and reduced wellbeing. Despite their central role, little is known about how sociodemographic inequalities influence caregivers' mental health in cancer contexts.

This scoping review synthesized recent research on the relationship between caregiver sociodemographic factors and wellbeing outcomes in cancer care. Following PRISMA-ScR guidelines, a systematic PubMed search identified studies published between 2020 and 2025 using terms related to family caregiving, cancer, sociodemographics, and wellbeing. After eligibility screening, 12 peer-reviewed studies were included. Data were extracted on cancer type, caregiver characteristics, sociodemographic variables, wellbeing measures, and key findings.

The studies focused on caregivers of patients with breast, pediatric, and oral cancers. Reported wellbeing outcomes included stress, depression, anxiety, resilience, quality of life, and preparedness for caregiving or end-of-life support. Across nearly all studies, lower income, limited education, female gender, and unemployment were consistently associated with poorer psychological outcomes. Eleven of the twelve studies identified significant links between sociodemographic disadvantage and heightened distress. Conversely, factors such as marital status, religious affiliation, and prior caregiving experience were occasionally tied to greater resilience or reduced burden.

Overall, this review highlights that caregiver wellbeing in cancer care is shaped not only by clinical demands but also by structural and social inequities. Sociodemographic disadvantage consistently predicts greater mental health vulnerability. These findings underscore the need for equity-driven, culturally responsive interventions to safeguard high-risk caregivers and prevent cancer care systems from reinforcing existing social inequalities.



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sciforum-152316: Women's subjective well-being – a micro-level analysis for Poland and Lithuania

Agnieszka Wojewódzka-Wiewiórska¹ and Gintarė Vazonienė^{2,*}

¹ Department of Development Policy and Marketing, Institute of Economics and Finance, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, PL 02-787 Warsaw, Poland

² Department of Business and Rural Development Management, Faculty of Bioeconomy Development, Vytautas Magnus University, LT-53361 Kaunas, Lithuania

The research focuses on subjective well-being, which reflects what people think about various aspects of their lives. The assessment of the well-being of the population is a subject of interest to many scientific disciplines, as it has been noted that people who feel better are more productive at work and in society. Taking women's perspectives into account allows for a broader understanding of specific social groups and provides a basis for the development of appropriate social policy instruments to empower women. The aim of the study was to determine the level of subjective well-being of women at the local level and to identify socio-economic factors related to the subjective well-being of women. The analysis takes into account the examples of Poland and Lithuania as countries with similar historical conditions and levels of development. The study on women's well-being used qualitative data from the European Social Survey (ESS) round 10 (2021), which is one of the most methodologically reliable survey studies in Europe. Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression were applied. The research revealed differences in the level of life satisfaction and happiness in Poland and Lithuania. Differences in the level of well-being were also found depending on the place of residence of women and in relation to men. Both age and subjective health assessment proved to be significant factors influencing women's subjective well-being. Furthermore, the study revealed that women's well-being at the local level is determined by various factors related to the territory and characteristics of the respondents, and the selection of all its socio-economic determinants poses a challenge for further research. Subjective well-being from a gender perspective should be systematically monitored in order to achieve a higher level of well-being across society.



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Session 2. Disabled People/People with Disabilities (Non-Medical Coverage)

sciforum-155156: A Proposed Guideline for Adapting School Track and Field Events for Students with Physical Disabilities in Alignment with International Standards

Abdelrahman Elsayy

Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Physical Education, Faculty of sports science, Assiut University, Assiut 71515, Egypt

This study aims to develop a practical guideline for adapting track and field events in school physical education programs for students with physical disabilities. The guideline is grounded in international standards set by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and World Athletics, along with recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) on physical activity for persons with disabilities and UNESCO principles on inclusive education. The need for such a resource emerges from the noticeable scarcity of applied frameworks that demonstrate how athletics events can be adapted for students with physical impairments in school settings—an issue that limits their opportunities for participation, engagement, and motor development when compared to their peers.

The study employed the descriptive method by reviewing relevant literature, previous studies, international regulations, and recognized para-sport adaptation manuals to extract applicable principles for school environments. The proposed guideline outlines procedures for adapting races and field events, modifying equipment and assistive devices, adjusting officiating rules, and restructuring movement pathways to suit students' functional abilities.

The findings support the feasibility and value of implementing adapted athletics programs in schools, as they contribute to enhancing physical competence, increasing participation levels, promoting motivation toward physical activity, and strengthening social inclusion and self-confidence among students with physical disabilities. Accordingly, the study recommends adopting the proposed guideline within physical education curricula and providing professional development for PE teachers to ensure effective implementation that aligns with students' physical and developmental characteristics.



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sciforum-155633: Easy-to-read communication for cancer screening in people with intellectual disabilities: The Slovak perspective

Gabriela Stefkova^{1,*}, Suzanne Denieffe², Margaret Denny³, Laura Widger⁴, Francoise Hickey² and Olga Silvášiová⁵

¹ Nursing Department, Faculty of Medicine, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Trieda SNP 1, 040 11 Košice, Slovak Republic

² Faculty of Arts and Humanities, South East Technological University, X91, Ireland

³ Faculty of Health Science, University of Maribor, SI-2000, Slovenia

⁴ Faculty of Education and LifeLong Learning, South East Technological University, X91, Ireland

⁵ Baby planet, Letná 10/43, 04001 Košice, Slovakia

Background: People with intellectual disabilities (PwIDD) face an increased risk of developing cancer and encounter multiple barriers to participating in screening programs, including limited awareness, communication challenges, and lack of social support. Cancer remains a major public health issue in Slovakia, yet participation in national screening programs remains below the European average. Strengthening social support from caregivers and healthcare professionals is essential to promote participation and understanding of preventive health measures. **Methods:** Within the European COST Action CUPID project CA21123 (Cancer Understanding, Prevention and Improved Detection for People with Intellectual Disabilities), a Summer School in Prague brought together participants from across Europe to co-create inclusive health communication tools. **Results:** As part of this collaboration, easy-to-read information material was developed to promote understanding of cancer prevention and screening. The Slovak version was adapted to national screening programs (breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer) and designed to meet the communication needs of PwIDD. The Slovak version of the easy-to-read material can also be used as a supportive educational activity in the course of health education for nursing students and to raise awareness for caregivers. **Conclusion:** This initiative demonstrates how accessible communication and international collaboration can improve cancer prevention and promote equity in health.

Acknowledgment: This work is based upon work from COST Action CUPID CA21123, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). The authors also gratefully acknowledge all participants of the CUPID Summer School in Prague for their collaboration.



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sciforum-151266: Immersive Virtual Reality for Peer Support in Spinal Cord Injury: A Qualitative Pilot Study

Ashmita Singh^{1*}, Yasaman Mashayekhi¹, Noah Martin¹, Matin Dokht Taghirad¹, Terry Tenove², Rob MacIsaac², Emily Armstrong¹ and Martin Ferguson-Pell¹

¹ Rehabilitation Robotics Laboratory, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (Physical Therapy), University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

² Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, Calgary, AB T2H 1H7, Canada

Peer support provides essential emotional, informational, and practical assistance to individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI), complementing professional healthcare by addressing psychosocial needs and fostering self-management. However, access to in-person peer programs is often limited, particularly in rural or underserved regions, due to geographic, environmental, and mobility-related barriers. Emerging technologies offer promising avenues to overcome these challenges.

This qualitative pilot study explored the potential of spatial meeting technologies, including immersive virtual reality (VR), to enhance virtual peer support for individuals with SCI. Using a descriptive qualitative design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants (n = 10) who engaged in two phases of weekly peer support: conventional videoconference sessions via Zoom and spatial VR-based sessions. Interviews were analyzed inductively using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework, with reflexive team-based coding to ensure rigor and trustworthiness.

Findings revealed three overarching themes: (1) *Accessibility and Convenience*—VR reduced geographic and environmental barriers while providing participants with greater flexibility and inclusivity; (2) *Enhanced Social Presence*—spatial environments fostered a stronger sense of connection, engagement, and community compared to traditional videoconferencing; and (3) *Learning and Empowerment*—immersive settings supported more open dialogue, shared problem-solving, and increased confidence in managing SCI-related challenges. Participants also highlighted barriers, including technological learning curves and the need for tailored onboarding support.

This study demonstrates that spatial meeting technologies hold promise for strengthening peer mentorship and reducing isolation among people with SCI. While preliminary, the findings suggest that integrating immersive tools into peer support networks can extend the reach and impact of rehabilitation beyond hospital and urban settings. Future research should expand sample diversity, refine training protocols, and evaluate long-term outcomes to inform scalable, accessible models of virtual peer support.



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sciforum-148542: Multilingual and Region-Specific Image Captioning and Contextual Scene Recognition using Transformer-Based Architecture for Inclusive Technology Design for Visually Impaired

Dr. Lija Jacob and Thomas K T

School of Sciences, Christ University, Bengaluru 560029, India

Inclusivity has become a central theme in the development of digital technologies. Designing with inclusivity in mind requires that systems remain accessible and valuable to users irrespective of their age, gender, or socio-economic background. However, most applications remain restricted to a single language—primarily English—thereby marginalizing large groups of non-English-speaking individuals. This work explores the integration of Computer Vision (CV) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to enhance accessibility for visually impaired users, with a particular emphasis on multilingual support in assistive technologies. Through a review of existing literature and user experiences, the study identifies language barriers as a major obstacle in accessing essential services. To address this, we employ a multi-stage methodology for multilingual image captioning. Image-caption pairs were extracted from the MS COCO dataset, reformatted into JSON, and translated from English to local language (currently Hindi) to generate a bilingual corpus. The model combines Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) for image feature extraction with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) units for sequence generation, enabling the system to capture temporal dependencies inherent to natural language. Experimental outcomes indicate that the model can generate Hindi captions with about 80% accuracy, effectively describing visual scenes despite some grammatical limitations. Real-time camera integration and a text-to-voice module further enhance usability by delivering immediate audio captions to visually impaired users. Future work will focus on transformer-based multilingual architectures and larger datasets to improve accuracy, contextual richness, and language coverage, moving towards a robust, speech-enabled assistive platform.



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sciforum-124065: Social Participation and Occupational Identity in Adults with Disabilities: A Qualitative Study on the Role of Occupational Therapy in Community Reintegration

Myrto Patagia Bakaraki¹ and Theofanis Dourbois²

¹ University of West Attica

² KESYTHES

Introduction:

Social inclusion and participation are core determinants of health and wellbeing, particularly for individuals with disabilities. Occupational therapy (OT), when viewed through a sociological lens, can act as a transformative force that empowers individuals to reclaim meaningful roles in their communities. This study aims to explore the experiences of adults with acquired physical disabilities in relation to occupational identity and reintegration, emphasizing the role of community-based OT interventions.

Methods:

A qualitative phenomenological design was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 adult participants (aged 28–64) who had acquired disabilities (e.g., post-stroke, traumatic injury) and participated in community-based occupational therapy programs in two urban rehabilitation centers in Greece. Interviews focused on perceived changes in occupational identity, social relationships, and participation in daily life. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework.

Results:

Three overarching themes emerged: (1) *"Loss and Reclamation of Occupational Self"*, describing the disruption and gradual reconstruction of identity; (2) *"Barriers to Participation"*, including structural inaccessibility and societal stigma; and (3) *"The Empowering Role of Occupational Therapy"*, highlighting individualized, culturally sensitive interventions that fostered agency, self-efficacy, and community involvement.

Conclusions:

This study underscores the critical importance of contextualized, participatory OT practices that align with sociological principles of equity and inclusion. Occupational therapists are uniquely positioned to advocate for structural and attitudinal changes while co-creating inclusive occupational opportunities with service users. The findings support a broader, non-medicalized understanding of disability aligned with the social model and human rights frameworks.



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Session 3. Sport/Leisure/Recreation/Tourism

sciforum-154516: From Risk to Resilience: A Bibliometric and Systematic Review of Tourist Loyalty and Sustainable Tourism in Coastal and Post-Pandemic Contexts (2020–2025)

Miloş (Ilie) Constantina Alina¹ and Andreea-Daniela Moraru²

¹ West University of Timisoara & Ovidius University of Constanta & Romanian Academy

² Faculty of Economic Sciences, "Ovidius" University of Constanța, Romania

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted global tourism, with coastal and nature-based destinations particularly affected due to the disproportionate impacts resulting from their dependence on seasonal international markets, fragile local economies, and ecological sensitivity. These destinations revealed structural vulnerabilities—such as overreliance on mass tourism and limited crisis governance—and opportunities for transformation toward regenerative, community-centered, and digitally enabled tourism models. This study employs a mixed-methods design that integrates bibliometric mapping and a systematic literature review (SLR), following the PRISMA 2020 protocol. A corpus of 49 peer-reviewed articles (2020–2025) indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection was analyzed using Biblioshiny (R-Bibliometrix) and VOSviewer to examine scientific production, collaboration networks, co-citation structures, and thematic evolution. Results identify five thematic clusters: (1) community perception and social sustainability; (2) governance and tourism recovery policies; (3) tourist behavior, risk perception, and loyalty; (4) resilience and domestic tourism; and (5) sustainability values and methodological innovation. The conceptual synthesis demonstrates that perceived risk and trust influence satisfaction and loyalty, reinforcing behavioral resilience and sustainable practices. The temporal evolution of research reveals a transition from short-term crisis responses (2020–2021) to adaptive governance and transformation-oriented models (2023–2025), emphasizing digital innovation and sustainability integration. Theoretically, this study bridges micro-level behavioral constructs with macro-level sustainability governance, while, methodologically, it validates the complementarity of bibliometric and systematic approaches. From a managerial perspective, findings underline that digital engagement, local participation, and sustainability-oriented governance are foundational to rebuilding resilient tourism systems in post-pandemic coastal contexts.



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sciforum-153420: Beyond the Game: The Contradictory Logics of Sport

Alicia Martínez Moreno and Raúl Ruiz Callado

Universidad de Alicante

Sport is widely recognized as a tool for social change, yet it operates through often contradictory logics. This paper aims to comparatively analyze two of these opposing logics of social innovation in contemporary sport: the logic of inclusion and the logic of selection.

To this end, a mixed-methods comparative case study, part of an ongoing doctoral dissertation, is presented. The first case ("Community Sport") analyzes a socio-sport project in a context of high vulnerability in Alicante (Spain), focusing on migrant-background children and youth. The second case ("Sport for Excellence") examines the high-performance sport model within a Spanish university institution, which functions as a talent management system.

Research progress shows divergent results that reflect both logics. In the community-based case, the inclusion model achieves a majority participation of migrant-background girls (63.3%), reversing historical trends of exclusion documented at the national level. Conversely, the excellence model operates through a strict selection of talent, generating a specific habitus and lifestyles centered on performance.

The analysis concludes that sport is not a univocal social tool; its social impact depends on the logic that structures it. It can simultaneously function as a powerful mechanism for equity and social cohesion at the grassroots level, and as a system of stratification and elite production at the top. Understanding this ambivalence is crucial for designing more effective and socially-aware public sports policies.



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sciforum-153657: Human Resource Management and Labor Relations in Tourism and Cultural Enterprises: Evidence from Crete

Eleni Rompoti^{1,*} and Zopounidis Konstandinos²

¹ School of Production Engineering and management, Technical University of Crete, 73100 Chania, Greece

² Technical University of Crete

This paper, entitled *“Human Resource Management and Labor Relations in Tourism and Cultural Enterprises: Evidence from Crete”*, presents the findings of a postdoctoral research conducted at the Technical University of Crete, Greece. The study aims to highlight the significance of leadership, the quality of labor relations, and the development of skills in the sectors of tourism and culture—two fields of strategic importance not only for the Greek economy but also for the broader study of the sociology of tourism.

The methodology adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research. In the quantitative phase, questionnaires were distributed to 500 tourist and cultural enterprises across all prefectures of Crete, mapping management practices and human resource strategies. In the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with employees, providing insights into workplace experiences, levels of job satisfaction, and the social dynamics shaping labor relations.

The results demonstrate that business success depends on two interrelated pillars. First, the leadership capabilities of employers, who are responsible for cultivating a culture built on trust, collaboration, and continuous learning. Second, the employees' competencies - both technical (hard skills) and social (soft skills) - which enhance productivity, improve service quality, and ultimately shape the visitors' experience. At a sociological level, these labor relations and skills transcend the workplace, generating social identities, professional status, and collective experiences that influence how tourism is perceived and experienced as a social and cultural phenomenon.

In conclusion, the study shows that the synergy between management and the workforce functions not only as a mechanism of competitiveness but also as a social driver shaping the resilience, sustainability, and legitimacy of the tourist and cultural sectors. The contribution of this research is therefore twofold: it provides practical guidance for human resource management and enriches sociological discourse on tourism as domain where labor, economy, and society intersect.



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sciforum-146334: Motivation and intention to perform physical activity in secondary-school students

H. Antonio Pineda-Espejel *, David Aguiar and Daniel Velásquez

Facultad de Deportes, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali 21100, México

Introduction. Physical education (PE) plays an important role in the acquisition of physical activity in leisure-time (PA) and sports habits (Kilpatrick et al., 2002). PE classes can improve adolescents' motivation to practice PA or sports outside of school and are an attractive field for analyzing PA related to variables such as behavioral intention (Sun and Chen, 2010). Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2017) can help understand and explain human motivation and behavior. SDT also establishes that human behavior is motivated by the satisfaction of three primary and universal psychological needs (Ryan and Deci, 2000): relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Within the actual socialization practices relevant to BPN, interpersonal styles or behaviors that support said BPN are crucial. Our objective was to relate PE teacher interpersonal styles (support for autonomy, relatedness, and competence), motivation (autonomous, controlled, and amotivation), and the intention to engage in PA outside of school. **Method.** The participants were 655 students (317 boys, 335 girls) between the ages of 12 and 15 ($M = 12.77$; $SD = 0.73$), from both public and private secondary schools, who answered a set of questionnaires to measure the study variables. **Results.** Students' perception that their teacher supports each of the BPNs is positively associated with autonomous motivation in PE classes and the intention to engage in physical activity outside of school, as well as negatively with amotivation. Amotivation is negatively associated with the intention to engage in PA. **Conclusion.** A PE teacher showing support for BPNs is associated with a greater intention to engage in PA outside of school in adolescents immersed in PE.



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sciforum-152007: Psychological Values and Attitudinal Predictors of Sustainable Tourism Consumption

Miloş (Ilie) Constantina Alina ^{1,2} and Mariana Floricica Călin ^{1,*}

¹ Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, “Ovidius” University of Constanţa, Bd. Mamaia 124, 900527 Constanţa, Romania

² Doctoral School of Marketing, West University of Timişoara, Bd. Vasile Pârvan 4, 300223 Timişoara, Romania

Introduction. Sustainable consumption in tourism is not determined solely by rational economic choices but is deeply rooted in psychological processes, particularly personal values and attitudinal orientations. Values function as guiding principles that shape environmental responsibility, social connectedness, and individual motivation to engage in sustainable practices. This study explores the role of psychological values in predicting attitudes toward sustainable tourism while also considering whether demographic factors such as parental status and education level exert moderating effects.

Methods. A quantitative survey design was applied, using the V21 Values Questionnaire to assess dimensions such as autonomy, social relationships, rule compliance, and security, alongside a standardized scale measuring attitudes toward sustainable tourism. Data were collected online from a convenience sample of 95 respondents residing in Constanţa and Tulcea counties, Romania. Statistical analyses included descriptive measures, correlations, and group comparisons conducted with SPSS v.24.

Results. Findings reveal that stronger endorsement of values related to autonomy, relational orientation, adherence to social norms, and security is significantly associated with more favorable attitudes toward sustainable tourism. Demographic factors such as parental status and education level did not substantially alter these relationships. The results highlight that value-based orientations, rather than socio-demographic characteristics, provide the psychological foundation for pro-environmental attitudes in tourism consumption.

Conclusions. This study underscores the pivotal role of psychological values in shaping sustainable consumption, suggesting that attitudinal change in tourism is more effectively achieved through the reinforcement of value-driven motivations than by relying on demographic segmentation. These findings open pathways for designing psychologically informed interventions and communication strategies that promote sustainable tourism behavior.



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sciforum-153855: Social Sustainability as an Attractive Lever for a Sport Tourism Event: The Case of Running

Barbara Mazza

Department of Communication and Social Research, Sapienza University of Rome, 00198 Rome, Italy

Among sporting events, running events are considered among the most effective for fostering social inclusion and integration for both residents and sports tourists. They often involve charitable activities, raise sociocultural awareness of sustainability issues, and organise activities, such as plogging, to provide participants with first-hand experiences that educate them about sustainable behaviour. The research questions are structured as follows: 1) What social sustainability practices do running events adopt to raise awareness and inspire action among residents and participants? 2) How do these events communicate their commitment to social sustainability? How effective are social sustainability practices and sustainable communication?

In this study, we analysed 18 marathons and half-marathons worldwide, examining the social sustainability practices implemented and how they communicated to stakeholders, residents, and sports tourists. The case studies were drawn from international rankings, such as the AIMS Green Award 2022, which identified the most sustainable running events. More specific information was then collected from the documentation produced by the organising teams for the 2024 edition and analysed in 2025, as well as from institutional websites and social networks for sustainable communication management. The analysis was carried out using qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches, the construction of synthetic indices and the use of correlation tests to verify the validity of the results.

The study identifies both strengths and weaknesses in the communication and engagement practices of the marathons examined. The highlights show that, despite the commitment to making an effective contribution to social sustainability, efforts are often limited to charitable activities rather than creating a lasting impact. Likewise, communication analysis highlights the ability to influence the behaviour of predisposed individuals rather than fostering genuine change in social behaviour. These findings offer valuable insights for scholars and practitioners wishing to improve the effectiveness of sustainable communication in sports events.



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sciforum-149785: Whose Cohesion? Community Voices on Sport, Exclusion, and Marginalization

Louis Moustakas

Institute for Sport and Sustainable Development, University of Applied Sciences Kufstein, Kufstein 6330, Austria

Introduction: Sport has increasingly been recognised as a tool to foster social cohesion, especially within marginalised and diverse communities. At the same time, this potential has often been undermined by short-term, under-resourced programmes that shift responsibility for social change onto already vulnerable groups, rather than providing sustainable, structural support. In particular, the realities and needs of communities and community organisations have often been neglected, leading to mismatches between programmes or support offered by municipalities and the actual needs on the ground.

Against this background, this study presents a needs analysis conducted in Dublin, Ireland, investigating how sport can be used to foster social cohesion within two of the city's disadvantaged areas. It focuses on how stakeholders perceive social cohesion in their communities, what role they believe sport can play in supporting it, and what needs exist to strengthen cohesion through sport.

Method: This study relies on a mix of qualitative methods, including interviews, qualitative survey responses, and fieldwork observations. Reflexive Thematic Analysis is used to develop themes aligned with the research goals.

Results: Social cohesion is often limited by an “us-versus-them” dynamic that pits minorities against the majority white Irish population. In this context, sport is seen as an accessible tool that can bring groups together and promote understanding. However, sport programmes are constrained by a lack of coordination with the municipality and across service providers, particularly regarding facility access and pathways for talented youth.

Conclusions: While the potential of sport and the need for greater coordination and resources are widely recognised, stakeholders emphasise that tensions between groups—and the media narratives that exacerbate them—remain a significant challenge. Importantly, this “us-versus-them” dynamic not only fuels division but also distracts from interrogating deeper systemic issues, including the unequal distribution of wealth and access to services.



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Session 4. Equity/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

sciforum-154909: “Africa– That’s not My Name”: Navigating Hybrid Identities and Inclusion for Recent African Immigrants in the US South from a Decolonial Feminist Perspective

Iye Ogbe-Dibia

Kennesaw State University

Despite growing Black African immigration to the U.S. South, dominant integration frameworks overlook the historical and cultural contexts shaping Black migration. As a result, the distinct stories, desires, and post-migration strategies of this population are often silenced. This dissertation addresses this gap by examining first-generation sub-Saharan African immigrants' lived experiences in Atlanta, Georgia, focusing on how these intersecting identities: race, gender, and reason for migration, affect their experiences of social inclusion. Through semi-structured interviews with 24 participants, 10 conflict-generated migrants and 14 voluntary migrants, this study employs a decolonial feminist lens to center participants' voices and epistemic sovereignty in defining social inclusion. Findings reveal that social inclusion is neither linear nor uniform but a dynamic, ongoing negotiation mediated by structural barriers and everyday interactions. Participants' hybrid identities functioned simultaneously as barriers and sources of resilience, requiring tripartite, strategic navigation between African heritage, American Blackness, and institutional expectations. Migration pathways shaped by colonial histories and ongoing geopolitical marginalization significantly influenced inclusion strategies: conflict-affected immigrants prioritized safety and community cohesion, while voluntary migrants emphasized professional advancement. Across experiences, participants employed cultural balancing, selective adaptation, and code-switching to maintain identity while expanding opportunities. This research makes three key contributions: (a) it applies decolonial feminist epistemology to African immigrant studies in the South; (b) it demonstrates that social inclusion requires context-specific, intersectional approaches rather than universal models; and (c) it positions the U.S. South as a unique site where historical racial legacies intersect with contemporary immigrant negotiations. The study reimagines immigrant belonging through frameworks that honor transnational attachments, recognize epistemic diversity, and acknowledge the affective, unfinished nature of inclusion.



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sciforum-155028: “Just Show Me, Don't Do It for Me”: Characterizing Effective Informal Support for Older Adults Digital Learning

Alba Meroño Asenjo*, Andrés Arias Astray, David Alonso González and Juan Brea Iglesias

Department of Social Work and Social Services, Faculty of Social Work, Campus de Somosaguas, Complutense University of Madrid, 28223 Pozuelo de Alarcón, Spain

Introduction: The increasing digitization of society has exacerbated the digital divide, particularly affecting older adults and creating significant barriers to social participation. This study addresses this challenge by analyzing the role of informal support networks in facilitating digital inclusion. These individuals, found within an older adult's immediate social circle, offer accessible, non-professional technological assistance. Understanding their characteristics and potential is crucial for developing effective community-based interventions to bridge this gap.

Methods: A qualitative methodological approach was employed. Data were collected through two focus groups with older adults (n=16) and semi-structured interviews with additional older adults (n=8) and potential informal experts (n=5), including family members, local merchants, and volunteers. The study aimed to identify the ideal profiles, desired characteristics, and challenges associated with these informal support figures from the perspective of both those receiving and providing help.

Results: The findings indicate that informal experts are most often family members, although neighbors and community professionals also play a role. Participants highly valued non-technical attributes such as patience, trustworthiness, availability, and the ability to explain complex tasks in simple terms. Key limitations identified were the lack of availability of these support figures and the significant emotional burden associated with both requesting and providing assistance. Furthermore, the study identified the emergence of "virtual" informal experts, such as voice assistants, AI chatbots, and online content creators, which expand the traditional definition of the concept.

Conclusion: Informal experts are a key resource for promoting the digital inclusion of older adults. The preference for relational, patient, and accessible support over formal technical expertise highlights the need for community-based interventions that empower these informal networks. These interventions can play a vital role in identifying, training, and supporting these individuals to create sustainable ecosystems of digital support.



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sciforum-155025: “They're not listening to me”: An analysis of epistemic injustice from the perspective of mental health activism in Spain

Juan Brea Iglesias *, David Alonso González, Andrés Arias Astray and Renata Nunes

Department of Social Work and Social Services, Faculty of Social Work, Campus de Somosaguas, Complutense University of Madrid, 28223 Pozuelo de Alarcón, Spain

Introduction. Mental health systems worldwide face criticism regarding power imbalances between professionals and service users. This research examines how individuals with psychiatric diagnoses in Spain experience marginalization of their knowledge and testimony within psychiatric care settings. Drawing on Fricker's epistemic injustice framework, this study investigates patterns of testimonial and hermeneutic injustice that affect patient autonomy, treatment participation, and social citizenship. **Methods.** A qualitative descriptive approach was implemented. Five focus group discussions involving 32 participants diagnosed with mental health conditions were conducted. Participants were recruited from mental health activism networks, ensuring diverse experiences across different psychiatric services and treatment trajectories. Thematic analysis identified patterns of epistemic injustice in clinical encounters and broader social contexts. **Results.** Analysis revealed systematic patterns where participants' testimonies were devalued by mental health professionals, limiting their credibility as knowers of their own experiences. Participants described exclusion from treatment decision-making processes and inadequate opportunities to articulate experiences for which interpretive resources were unavailable. These epistemic injustices extended beyond clinical settings, creating barriers to full participation in civic and social life due to stigmatized psychiatric identities. **Conclusions.** Findings demonstrate that epistemic injustices constitute a significant but underrecognized dimension of mental health care quality. Addressing these injustices requires structural reforms promoting shared decision making, valuing experiential knowledge, and challenging credibility deficits assigned to psychiatric service users. Implications extend to policy development emphasizing patient-centered approaches and social inclusion strategies that recognize individuals with mental health diagnoses as legitimate epistemic agents.



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sciforum-154736: Labour Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Tourism Sector: A Systematic Review from a Sociological Perspective

Rocío Blanco-Gregory¹ and Isabella Corvino²

¹ Departamento de Dirección de Empresas y Sociología. Universidad de Extremadura. Av. de la Universidad S/N, 10003 Cáceres, Spain

² Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione. Università degli Studi di Perugia. Piazza G. Marzio, 9-05035 Narni, Italy

Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's most dynamic industries, yet the employment inclusion of people with disabilities remains limited. This paper examines how labour inclusion in the tourism sector can contribute simultaneously to social equity, business competitiveness, and destination sustainability. This study highlights the ethical, social, and strategic relevance of integrating workers with disabilities as both a human rights issue and an opportunity for organizational innovation.

Methods

A systematic literature review was conducted to synthesize existing research on the employment of people with disabilities in the tourism and hospitality industries. Peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and case studies from international and Spanish contexts were analyzed. Particular attention was given to sociological perspectives that address diversity management, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and inclusive organizational cultures.

Results

The findings reveal that inclusive employment practices improve workplace climate, foster innovation, and enhance the tourist experience by promoting empathy and accessibility. Case studies such as ILUNION Hotels demonstrate that integrating employees with disabilities strengthens brand reputation, increases staff engagement, and aligns business models with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, inclusive tourism contributes to the humanization of destinations, benefiting both workers and visitors.

Conclusions

This study concludes that employment inclusion should be viewed not merely as a moral or legal requirement but as a strategic asset for sustainable tourism development. Promoting inclusive policies requires joint efforts among companies, policymakers, and educational institutions to overcome structural and attitudinal barriers. Ultimately, fostering diversity within the tourism workforce creates more humane, equitable, and competitive destinations.



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sciforum-139541: Rights under pressure: current refugee protection and legal challenges in Greece

Iris Bousiakou ^{1,2}

¹ School of Law, Politics and Social Sciences, Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU, UK

² School of Law, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD13DH, UK

In 2025, Greece continues to serve as both a gateway and a bottleneck for refugees seeking protection in Europe. This paper critically examines the evolving landscape of refugee rights in Greece, focusing on the tension between international legal obligations and national policy responses. The European Union's shifting asylum framework, border management practices, and increasing reliance on externalization strategies have exacerbated legal and humanitarian concerns. In Greece, these pressures manifest in restrictive asylum procedures, deteriorating reception conditions, and systemic challenges to access justice and social rights for asylum seekers and recognized refugees.

Through a doctrinal analysis of international, European, and Greek legal frameworks—especially the 1951 Refugee Convention, the EU Common European Asylum System (CEAS), and Greece's Law 4636/2019—the paper assesses whether current policies align with fundamental rights standards. Empirical data from recent reports, court cases, and field assessments are used to contextualize the legal critique. Particular attention is given to vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors and survivors of gender-based violence, who face disproportionate risks under current reception and detention regimes.

The paper argues that while Greece remains legally bound to uphold refugee rights, operational deficiencies, political pressures, and EU policy gaps have created an environment of conditional protection and limited legal remedies. It concludes with policy recommendations aimed at restoring rights-based asylum procedures, improving compliance with international standards, and enhancing solidarity mechanisms within the EU.



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sciforum-150926: Co-Creating Health Systems: An Anthropological Lens on Rural Mental Health Equity

Ashmita Singh^{1*}, Orsolya Welch², Jenna Richter³, Larry Woolliams³, Rebecca Purc-stephenson⁴, Emily Armstrong¹, Martin Ferguson-Pell⁵ and Megan Strickfaden⁶

¹ Rehabilitation Robotics Laboratory, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (Physical Therapy), University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

² Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci - Human Ecology Dept, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

³ Woolliams Farms Ltd., Rockyview, AB, Canada

⁴ Department of Social Sciences, Augustana Faculty, University of Alberta, Camrose, AB T4V 2R3, Canada

⁵ Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (Physical Therapy), University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9, Canada

⁶ Professor, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci - Human Ecology Dept, University of Alberta

Rural mental health inequities are frequently produced not by an absence of services but by systemic designs that fail to align with the lived realities of local communities. Findings from the From the Ground Up project in Rocky View County, Alberta, demonstrate that farmers encounter barriers embedded in geography and institutional logics that reflect outdated models of care. This paper situates these findings within an anthropological framework, advancing the view that health systems are not neutral infrastructures but socially constructed and culturally mediated assemblages.

Employing ethnographic fieldwork, participatory engagement, and design-thinking methods, we collaborated with farmers, community partners, and health professionals to surface needs, expectations, and symbolic understandings of health and wellbeing. This process generated a set of sixty-six guiding principles that point toward both “hard” innovations (telehealth services, resource networks) and “soft” innovations (community-led initiatives, identity-affirming practices). Reflexive practice was central, enabling the research team to unsettle institutional assumptions and re-center rural voices as epistemic authorities.

The analysis reveals persistent misalignments between institutional access points and agricultural lifeways, including seasonal rhythms of labor and culturally embedded practices of care. These misalignments reinforced experiences of invisibility and mistrust, positioning farmers as passive recipients rather than active agents. By contrast, community-forward approaches foregrounded dignity and agency, offering a more responsive and sustainable path toward equity. This paper concludes by reframing rural health systems as lived, co-constructed, and entangled, calling for a paradigm shift from designing for rural populations to designing with them. This shift emphasizes context-sensitive, participatory innovations that respect rural culture and lifeways, thereby bridging the gap between lived experience and systemic response.



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sciforum-155059: Conflict-Sensitive Design in Practice: Building Inclusive Systems across Divided Stakeholder Groups

Anne M Chance¹ and Volker Franke²

¹ TRENDS Global

² Executive Director - TRENDS Global

Design is often positioned as collaborative problem-solving, yet in contexts marked by structural inequity, historical trauma, or power asymmetry, collaboration itself can (re)produce harm. Conflict-Sensitive Design (CSD) integrates principles of Trauma-Informed Restorative Practice (TIRP) with participatory and peacebuilding design traditions. It extends the static philosophy of “Do No Harm” into an active process of inclusion. Drawing conceptually from conflict transformation, design justice, and critical social theory, CSD frames conflict not as a disruption to be managed but as a lens through which exclusion and relational imbalance become visible and can be addressed. Its foundational elements, contextual awareness, reflexivity, iterative feedback, and process transparency, align with trauma-informed commitments to safety, trustworthiness, and empowerment. CSD conceptualizes design as a sequenced, mediated process in which stakeholders situated in unequal or adversarial relationships engage through structured reflection and facilitated exchange. By integrating restorative principles of acknowledgment, repair, and inclusion, the framework reconceptualizes participation as resilience building through relational healing rather than procedural consensus. Understanding the emotional and historical dimensions of conflict deepens a society or community’s capacity for equity and inclusion. Conflict-Sensitive Design promotes a design ethic and implementation process grounded in care, accountability, and adaptive learning. CSD offers hope and a pathway for reimagining inclusion in divided societies and institutions.



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sciforum-153745: Equal in Sharing, Unequal in Care: Social Differences in Attitudes toward Shared Parental Leave in European Societies

Elitsa Dimitrova

Department of Demography, Institute for Population and Human Studies - Bulgarian Academy of sciences,
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria

This study explores how public attitudes toward the introduction of shared parental leave (SPL) as a legal measure for childcare vary across European societies. Specifically, it examines how individual-level characteristics and country-level characteristics related to gender equality and parental leave (PL) policy arrangements shape men and women's attitudes.

Drawing on data from the *European Social Survey* (2022/23), a random-intercept logit model was applied to analyze the relationship between individual and contextual factors and support for a legal measure requiring both parents to take equal periods of paid leave. The dependent variable distinguishes between negative or neutral versus positive attitudes toward the introduction of such a legal measure.

Individual-level variables include age, marital status, number of children, subjective household income, education, and place of residence. Contextual indicators encompass the Gender Equality Index (overall score and domains of work, money, and time), full-rate equivalent parental leave for mothers and fathers, shareable paid parental leave (in weeks), the full-time employment rate of mothers with children aged 0–14, and public expenditure on family leave per live birth (in current USD PPP).

Results indicate that in societies with advanced gender equality, support for a *rigid* legal requirement mandating equal parental leave is weaker, while **flexibility in leave use** is more strongly endorsed as a means of promoting gender equality. Conversely, in societies with larger gender disparities, the introduction of an **equal-split parental leave policy** is more likely to be perceived as a step toward greater equity, fairness, and improved reconciliation of paid work and childcare.



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sciforum-155183: Hybrid Identities and Cultural Dissonance: The Modern Tribal Self in a Changing World

Sili Rout

Research Projects Division, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi 110067, India

India, home to nearly 8.6% of the tribal population, has long been celebrated for its cultural diversity and ancestral wisdom. However, the rapid expansion of globalisation, digital connectivity, and urban migration has profoundly altered the cultural landscape of tribal communities, particularly affecting their younger generations. Once deeply rooted in collective traditions and local epistemologies, many tribal youths today find themselves negotiating the complex intersection of inherited values and modern aspirations.

The increasing penetration of social media has further intensified this cultural transition. Despite economic hardships, smartphones and internet access are widespread among tribal youth. Young tribal men and women engage actively as digital content creators, often seeking visibility and validation in virtual spaces that seldom reflect their lived realities. While a few benefit economically, many experience confusion, imitation, and detachment from their cultural roots.

This paper explores the emergence of *hybrid identities* among tribal youth that fluctuate between the community's cultural ethos and the mainstream world's individualistic values. Drawing on ethnographic observations and interpretive frameworks from social anthropology, the study examines how social media and urban exposure act as both agents of empowerment and vehicles of cultural dissonance. It argues that the tribal self today is neither entirely traditional nor fully modern, but dynamically situated in a “third cultural space” marked by negotiation, adaptation, and emotional ambiguity. The study concludes by emphasising the importance of culturally responsive education and inclusive policies that honour indigenous identity while supporting social mobility and creative self-expression.



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sciforum-155196: Immersive Behavioural Assessments for Autistic Job Seekers: A Protocol of a Participatory Approach to Autism-Inclusive Hiring Practices

Pariya Parchini^{1*}, Martin Ferguson-Pell² and Lonnie Zwaigenbaum³

¹ Rehabilitation Robotic Lab, Rehabilitation Science, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

² Professor, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta, 6-126F Clinical Sciences Building, 11304 83 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB, Canada

³ Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Background:

Autistic adults continue to experience disproportionately low employment rates, largely due to hiring processes that prioritize social communication and normative interaction styles over job-relevant competencies. Traditional structured interviews often disadvantage autistic candidates by amplifying anxiety and masking pressures. Emerging behavioural assessments such as immersive, game-based, or group simulations offer potential for fairer evaluation but remain underexamined in terms of accessibility, validity, and inclusion.

Objective:

This study aims to investigate how immersive behavioural assessments can be adapted to promote equity and inclusion for autistic job seekers. It examines participants' experiences, fairness perceptions, and task performance across two immersive virtual hiring formats and co-develops evidence-based recommendations for inclusive assessment practices.

Methods:

Guided by a participatory framework and Human-Centred Design Thinking (HCDT), this mixed-methods study will engage a Community Partnership Team (CPT) consisting of 5-6 autistic job seekers and hiring professionals. Two immersive virtual assessments will be conducted with participants, including autistic participants, non-autistic participants, and hiring professionals: a structured panel interview using Arthur One and a team-based escape-room task using AlignVR's Team Qualifier. Quantitative measures will include the Multiple Soft Skills Assessment Tool (MSSAT) and the Selection Procedural Justice Scale (SPJS) for fairness perceptions. Qualitative data will be derived from post-simulation reflections, open-ended surveys, and CPT workshop transcripts. Data integration will use descriptive statistics and reflexive thematic analysis to triangulate findings across stakeholder groups.

Expected Results:

Findings are expected to reveal whether immersive behavioural assessments provide more equitable opportunities for autistic candidates to demonstrate soft skills and whether perceived fairness and accessibility differ across interview formats.

Conclusion:

By combining immersive virtual technologies with participatory design, this study will generate co-designed best-practice recommendations and policy guidance for inclusive hiring. The outcomes aim to inform modernization of recruitment standards under Canada's Public Service Employment Act, advancing equitable employment pathways for neurodivergent job seekers.



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sciforum-154727: Precarious empowerment on TikTok: gendered digital informality and the paradox of new survival economies

Sabrina Bellafronte

Department of Social Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, 80126 Naples, Italy

This ongoing research explores socioeconomic insecurity (Probst, 2008) in Southern Italy through a mixed methods approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), with particular attention to the forms of female inactivity and marginality that translate into digital informal work (Williams, 2010; Williams, 2019; Park, 2025).

The condition of “autonomy” of digital traders and the invisibility of housewives’ domestic work (Fortunati, 2007) emerge as different but intertwined configurations of precariousness. In this context, home-based work and the emerging practices of live shopping on platforms such as TikTok represent a privileged observatory of bottom-up strategies to counter impoverishment, in response to the crisis of the welfare system and policies for female employment.

Live shopping is not only a new sales model but also a significant transformation of digital commerce that intertwines entertainment, interaction, and creativity within the domestic space (Conor, 2015; Harini, 2024; Puspawati, 2023).

The integrated analysis of official statistical sources, digital ethnography, and interviews enables the presentation of both macro perspectives and micro life stories, which are capable of describing the processes of redefining housewives’ economic survival strategies (Jarrett, 2016).

Live shopping thus constitutes a field of tensions between marginality and innovation, exclusion and new forms of empowerment. The informality of platforms opens up spaces for micro-entrepreneurship and self-employment, for equitable access to economic resources for housewives, but at the same time raises questions about new forms of self-exploitation and the balance between work and care (Arcidiacono, 2024; Farinella, 2021).

Digital labour (Fuchs, 2014), which by its very nature is not equally accessible and is potentially a generator of social and economic inequality, can it represent a real future alternative for inactive women? My research aims to clarify this paradox from a local and gendered perspective.



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sciforum-151991: Social and Professional Support for Single-Parent Families: Urban–Rural Disparities in Perceptions of Inclusion Policies

Mihaela Luminița Sandu ¹, Mariana Floricica Călin ¹, Mihaela Rus ^{2,3,*} and Miloș (Ilie) Constantina Alina ²

¹ Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ovidius University, Bulevardul Mamaia, nr. 124, Constanta, Romania

² Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, Ovidius University, Aleea Universității, nr. 1, 900470 Constanta, Romania

³ Institute of Psychology and Philosophy of the Romanian Academy

Introduction. Single-parent families, a vulnerable social group, face unique challenges in urban and rural areas, including economic hardship, limited professional opportunities, and social marginalization. The effectiveness of public policies and support programs in mitigating these risks varies depending on the social and geographical context, underscoring the need for tailored interventions.

Methods. The study employed a self-developed 22-item questionnaire administered to ninety-five respondents from both urban and rural areas of Romania. The instrument assessed access to, relevance of, and effectiveness of social inclusion policies, social support services, and professional support programs targeting single parents. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, normality tests, the Mann–Whitney U test, and Chi-square tests.

Results. The findings revealed significant urban–rural differences related to belief in social inclusion policies, accessibility of support services, and the availability of professional training opportunities. Urban respondents tended to be more critical but acknowledged the existence of specific services, while rural participants reported more acute deficiencies, emphasizing a lack of resources and opportunities. The most common barriers found included bureaucratic procedures, stigmatization, and insufficient specialized services. Moreover, respondents perceived professional support measures, such as career counseling and flexible employment, as inadequate, with rural participants expressing higher levels of dissatisfaction.

Conclusions. The results underscore the potential impact of tailored policy measures on the specific challenges of urban and rural environments. Priority actions should include expanding psychosocial counseling, strengthening professional training programs, promoting flexible employment opportunities, and fostering closer cooperation between employers and public authorities. Reducing territorial disparities is essential to ensure fair access to social and professional support for single-parent families and to foster their full social inclusion.



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sciforum-155201: Spontaneous Inclusive Designers: Perceptions, Histories, Attitudes and Influences

Joyce Thomas^{1*}, Naureen Mumtaz² and Megan Kemper Strickfaden³

¹ Ulm Associate Professor of Industrial Design, Auburn University

² Assistant Professor, Information Design Mount Royal University, Calgary AB

³ Professor of Design Studies & Material Culture, Department of Human Ecology Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences, University of Alberta

Fostering inclusive design is not easy considering uneven attention in design education to teaching about diversity, disability, design-for-all, and universal design. Inclusive design means to design for/with as many people as possible who embody the widest range of abilities with a myriad of life experiences. Our objectives are to: (1) identify how design professionals talk spontaneously about inclusive design; and (2) trace the sociocultural capital that has the potential to inform designing and teaching practices. Fourteen design professionals, who are practitioners and teachers simultaneously, from nine counties and seven locations were independently interviewed about design practice, processes, and education. This research differs from more controlled approaches (e.g., protocol analysis, direct inquiries about inclusion, disability, diversity) in that it accepts that data are largely driven by negotiated discussions between researchers and interviewees. This approach is invaluable when investigating more abstract research questions like perceptions of the design profession. Data analyses of verbatim transcription of individual 2- to 3.5-hour interviews were coded for direct references and indirect inferences related to inclusive design. These interviews produced stories of designers' educational backgrounds, experience in practice, and influences (i.e., individuals, other resources). The resulting data are rich narratives about designing and design teaching that reflect the personal values, beliefs and actions of the interviewees. Out of our fourteen interviewees, eleven spontaneously discussed inclusion, diversity, disability, inclusive design, design-for-all, and/or universal design. It also reveals that our interviewees have deep, intimate connections and experiences with disability in some way (e.g., family member, friend, or through school/work), rather than specific education in inclusive design. They also discuss how these experiences are transformed into being a design professional. Our presentation promises to center the voices of our interviewees towards better understanding how people's sociocultural capital influences attitudes and behaviors connected to inclusion and diversity.



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sciforum-152179: The “Silver Digital Divide” and Intergenerational Support Mechanisms among the Elderly in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Xi Jiang

Department of Literature and Media, Chengdu Jincheng College, Chengdu 610000, China

Globally, as societies become both older and more intelligent, ensuring the meaningful participation of older adults in the AI-driven world has become a critical concern for policymakers and researchers. Yet, research at the intersection of ageing, AI, and digital inequality remains fragmented and largely Western-centric, with limited empirical evidence from rapidly developing contexts such as China. China's transition creates a dual landscape of opportunity and risk for older adults. This “silver digital divide” reflects inequities in cognition, access, usage, and evaluation that heighten exclusion in the intelligent era. The intergenerational knowledge gap prevents many older adults from engaging in online interaction or civic discourse, rendering them “information poor”. This study adopts an interdisciplinary, mixed-qualitative design to explore how older adults can be meaningfully integrated into the AI-driven society. First, drawing upon an extensive literature review and policy analysis, this research maps both the global and Chinese landscapes of AI adoption among older populations, identifying multiple dimensions of digital inequality. The Cognition–Access–Usage–Evaluation (CAUE) framework is applied to systematically categorise the multi-layered digital divides experienced by older adults in the AI context. Empirical evidence is then generated through semi-structured interviews with senior citizens residing in both urban and rural settings, along with their adult children. Thematic analysis reveals that intergenerational technological support—encompassing emotional, informational, and instrumental forms—plays a pivotal mediating role in enhancing older adults' cognitive readiness, physical and networked access, operational competence, and evaluative capacity. To strengthen analytical rigour and inclusivity, these qualitative findings are triangulated with a supplementary survey measuring AI literacy and attitudes toward AI adoption. However, structural constraints such as algorithmic bias and unequal resources persist. This study concludes by advocating coordinated action across government, industry, and families to build equitable, age-friendly AI ecosystems.



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sciforum-155167: Understanding Regional Disparities in Foreign Migration Across Japan: A Hybrid Laplacian Diffusion–Gravity Approach

Eliud Kiprop^{1,*}, Vincent Kipkirui² and Sadia Irfan³

¹ Faculty of Liberal Arts, Lakeland University Japan, Tokyo 101-0064, Japan

² Graduate School of Engineering and Energy, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA 6150, Australia

³ Faculty of Education, Southwest University, Tiansheng Road N.2, Beibei District, Chongqing 400715, China

Japan's internal migration and foreign population inflows have exhibited strong regional disparities, with urban prefectures continuing to attract disproportionate shares of new residents. This study investigates the spatial diffusion patterns of foreign populations across Japan's 47 prefectures from 2020 to 2025 using official migration statistics and GIS-based prefectural boundary data. Tokyo recorded the highest foreign inflow (47,384 persons in 2023), followed by Kanagawa (25,286) and Saitama (29,020), while Chiba (–11,590) and Aichi (–4,765) exhibited substantial net outflows. Although diffusion-based models traditionally assume continuous local movement across adjacent regions, foreign migration in Japan often involves selective, policy-driven, and non-adjacent flows. To address this, the study extends the Laplacian diffusion framework by integrating gravity-based spatial terms that account for long-distance attraction effects. Each prefecture was represented as a node within an adjacency matrix derived from polygon neighbor analysis, and migration potential was estimated as a function of inter-prefectural connectivity and population differentials. Preliminary Laplacian coefficients indicate high diffusion intensity within the Tokyo–Kanagawa–Saitama cluster and low gradient values in peripheral prefectures such as Akita, Tottori, and Kochi, reflecting weak inflow attraction. The hybrid Laplacian–gravity model improved the predictive accuracy of migration patterns and revealed that regions with strong labor demand and foreigner integration programs act as key population attractors. The findings highlight spatial inequities in foreign migration diffusion and underscore the potential of targeted migration policies to facilitate the redistribution of foreign residents toward rural prefectures. This research provides empirical evidence that managed foreign migration can contribute to Japan's regional revitalization and sustainable demographic balance.



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sciforum-153652: University-to-Work Transition and Life Satisfaction among Portuguese and Mozambicans

Célia Sampaio ^{1,*}, António Monguela ², Odília Mussuei ², Gomes Nhantumbo ², Camilo Ussene ³, Maria do Céu Taveira ¹ and Ana Daniela Silva ⁴

¹ School of Psychology, University of Minho, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal

² School of Education and Psychology, Pedagogical University of Maputo, Maputo, Mozambique

³ Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique

⁴ Portuguese Association for Career Development (APDC), 4710-057 Braga, Portugal

The transition from university to the labor market represents a critical stage in the life course of young adults, with potential implications for well-being and long-term career development. Although this transition has been widely studied in Western contexts, less is known about its dynamics in low- and middle-income countries, and even less about cross-cultural comparisons among Lusophone populations. This study compared indicators of success in the university-to-work transition and levels of life satisfaction between Portuguese and Mozambican young adults. A total of 163 (59.5%) participants from Portugal and 111 (40.5%) from Mozambique, aged between 21 and 56 years ($M = 26.54$; $SD = 6.01$), participated in the study. Data were collected through a sociodemographic questionnaire and measures of transition success and life satisfaction. Comparative analyses between countries used t-tests for independent samples and Pearson correlations to examine associations between transition variables and life satisfaction. Portuguese participants reported higher means in integration and professional satisfaction, while Mozambicans stood out in confidence in career future and work adaptation, with no significant differences in other dimensions or life satisfaction. Correlations showed positive and significant associations between all dimensions of transition success and life satisfaction in both countries. These findings highlight that, despite cultural and contextual differences, successful navigation of the university-to-work transition is consistently associated with higher life satisfaction in both Portugal and Mozambique. Importantly, these results should also be interpreted through an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lens. Differences in labor market structures, access to resources, and social inequalities may create unequal opportunities for career development and well-being. Strengthening EDI-oriented policies, including inclusive career guidance, equitable training access, and targeted support for underrepresented groups, could enhance fairness and inclusion in the university-to-work transition, particularly in low- and middle-income settings.



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Session 5. Science and Technology

sciforum-145785: How much pollution do digital devices and smartphones cause? A local sociological investigation

Giacomo Buoncompagni

Political and Communication Science, University of Macerata, 62100 Macerata, Italy

This study examines the intricate relationship between smartphone usage among Italian university students and their understanding of the environmental consequences associated with smartphone production and consumption.

The research integrates quantitative data from a survey of 230 communication undergraduates from Macerata, Bologna and Florence with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews to explore patterns of usage, social meanings and levels of ecological awareness. The study reveals a pervasive dependence on smartphones coupled with a limited understanding of the extractive and energy-intensive processes behind their manufacture.

The pandemic intensified both usage and the associated psychological effects, revealing ambivalence towards digital technologies. Drawing on theories of digital degrowth and technological colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019), the study highlights the urgent need to promote digital ecological education and encourage collective action in order to transition towards more sustainable and equitable models of technological consumption.

Only through combined efforts in raising awareness, providing education and implementing policies can consumers influence structural changes that would reduce the environmental footprint and address the global inequalities inherent in digital capitalism. The future of smartphone production and consumption is thus at a crucial crossroads. On the one hand, growing global demand and technological innovation are driving continued market expansion, with significant implications for resource extraction, energy production, and e-waste management. On the other, growing awareness of environmental and social impacts is driving an urgent need to rethink more sustainable and circular consumption models, encouraging repair, recycling, and extending the lifespan of devices. In this scenario, digital ecology education plays a strategic role, as it can foster greater individual and collective responsibility, promoting conscious practices of critical use and consumption.



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sciforum-155316: Letters of Care: Educating Clinicians for Caring Design in the AI/Hybrid Era

Ehsan Baha ^{1,*}, Patrick von Hauff ² and Pamela Brett-MacLean ³

¹ Department of Art & Design, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

² Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

³ Department of Psychiatry, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Design continuously evolves in response to societal change, shaping and being shaped by how people live and care for one another. In healthcare, care is a central professional and ethical principle, yet its design dimensions remain underexplored in medical education. While clinicians understand care in daily practice, they are often unaware of how design can extend care beyond individual encounters toward systemic, technological, and societal transformation.

This paper reports on Designing Health Systems, an ongoing online course delivered by the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at University of Alberta, Canada, to 60 second-year medical students at the Wenzhou Medical University, China. The course invites students to explore how professional care could be expressed through meaningful innovations at different scales—individual, cultural, and systemic—and pathways such as products, resources, programs, and policy initiatives.

Situated within the emerging AI/Hybrid Design Paradigm, where human and technological forms of care increasingly intertwine and reconfigure clinicians' roles, instructors wrote and shared letters of care as prompts for dialogue. These were synthesized into a collective letter to the cohort, followed by targeted letters providing feedback to project groups. The letters embodied care as both a relational and epistemic act—modeling rather than merely teaching what caring design entails.

Adopting a pedagogical design research approach grounded in reflective practice (Schön, 1983), we iteratively reflected in and on action by producing and discussing letters, student responses, and innovations. This process revealed that educating through care enacts the values we aim to teach. Analysis shows how students reciprocated this experience by developing a sense of care toward their projects, evident in the authenticity rooted in personal experiences and clinical reflections rather than AI content. Ultimately, this work aims to nurture clinicians who collaboratively create ethical, humane, and sustainable health-system innovations that uphold care as a foundational value in the AI/Hybrid Design Era.



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sciforum-155189: A Scoping Review of Sociological Literature on Sex Dolls and Sex Robots (2000–2025)

Lisa D'Errico

Department of Social Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

This scoping review intervenes in a fast-growing yet fragmented field. Sex dolls and sex robots are cast as artefacts that promise the personalization of intimacy (Illouz 2007; 2012), while scholarship ranges across ethical–normative debates, STS/posthumanist perspectives, the sociology of emotions, and sexual-script theory under heterogeneous labels that hinder comparison. We ask how sociology has conceptualized and labelled these artefacts (2000–2025), which theoretical frames and lexicons predominate and how they have evolved, and which methodological approaches are privileged alongside the main thematic, geographical, and methodological gaps. Following Arksey & O'Malley (2005) and PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018), we search Scopus and Web of Science using strings that combine “sex robot,” “love doll,” “real doll,” “sex doll,” and “companion robot.” We include peer-reviewed contributions adopting a social perspective that treat dolls/robots as a primary object or a relevant case, and exclude studies that are purely clinical/medical, legal, engineering, or psychological without sociocultural analysis. Data are organized in an extraction matrix (Excel) and analysed with Biblioshiny to provide an initial quantitative mapping and a qualitative, directed content analysis that identifies and defines the field's core conceptual frames. The study start in 2000 to capture shifts that precede and accompany two symbolic milestones: David Levy's *Love and Sex with Robots* (2007) and the public unveiling of Roxxy at the AVN Adult Entertainment Expo (Las Vegas, 9 January 2010). A prior synthesis (Döring & Pöschl, 2018) offers interdisciplinary context but is not a sociological scoping review and does not systematically map theoretical frames—gaps this study addresses. Preliminary patterns indicate a predominance of ethical/speculative discourse over empirical research, Western/Anglophone concentration, non-standardized terminology, limited attention to everyday practices (care, partner negotiation) and to disability/LGBTQ+ perspectives, and few mixed-methods designs. Expected outputs are a reproducible corpus, a typology of sociological frames, and an indicator matrix to operationalize core constructs, improving comparability and cumulative knowledge.



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sciforum-148648: DigComp and Its Limits: New Human Resource Management Constructs for Generative AI Skills

Ioannis Zervas * and Emmanouil Stiakakis

Department of Applied Informatics, University of Macedonia, 54636 Thessaloniki, Greece

Background: The integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in workplaces, especially in knowledge-intensive environments such as consulting, ICT, and business services, creates new skill requirements that are not sufficiently addressed by existing frameworks such as DigComp. Although DigComp remains a key reference for European digital skills policy, it does not fully explain how GenAI-related competences are mobilised through HRM practices or how they influence inclusion and performance. This study introduces two novel constructs: Prompt Self-Efficacy (PSE), describing employees' confidence in designing effective prompts for GenAI tools, and GenAI Readiness (GAIR), referring to their preparedness to integrate such tools into daily work. These constructs aim to capture emerging competences not covered by traditional frameworks. **Methods:** A structured 5-point Likert questionnaire was completed by 420 knowledge workers from Greece and Italy—two Southern European countries with similar work cultures and educational systems, comparable in digital transformation dynamics. Participants were employed in consulting, ICT, and business service sectors, all working in hybrid arrangements that combine on-site and remote tasks within the same week. Data were analysed using PLS-SEM, assessing measurement reliability, structural validity, predictive relevance (PLSpredict), and performance priorities (IPMA). **Results:** Findings confirmed that PSE positively predicts GAIR, while both GAIR and Inclusive e-HRM practices enhance Perceived Skill Utilisation (PSU). PSU acts as the key mechanism linking GenAI competences to digital task performance. **Conclusions:** The study highlights the limits of DigComp in the GenAI context, proposing HRM-oriented and socially grounded constructs that better explain skill utilisation and performance. It provides HR professionals with a practical priority map for strategic interventions enhancing equality, development, and effectiveness in digital workplaces.



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sciforum-125661: Digital and Social Ethnography: The Case of Youth Digital Platforms

Polydora Anna Eleni

International and European Studies and Special Education, University of Macedonia and Aegean College,
GR-54636 Thessaloniki, Greece

This research paper explores the growing need to understand how young people engage with digital platforms in an era where online interaction shapes socialization, learning and civic participation. Despite the rapid expansion of youth-oriented digital environments, there remains limited empirical insight into how these spaces influence behavior, identity, and social values. This study adopts a digital and social ethnography approach—derived from the ancient Greek term “*ethos*” (custom) and *graphy* (to write). This approach systematically observes and interprets the customs, behaviors and interactions of users in digital environments. This methodological lens allows for the examination of both the constructive and potentially addictive patterns of engagement that characterize contemporary youth participation online. The analysis focuses on globally recognized youth platforms (Global Youth Action, UNICEF Youth Participation, World Youth Forum) and European-level initiatives (European Youth Portal, EPALE, SALTO-YOUTH, Lifelong Learning Platform, Digital Skills & Jobs Platform, EURES, Europass). This study investigates how young users aged 15–35 use these platforms for personal, educational, and social development. Findings reveal that adolescents aged 15–25 primarily use these platforms to develop cognitive and social skills, express emotions and opinions, share content and seek entertainment. Within this group, approximately 30% also participate in quality-of-life improvement campaigns, seek employment, access informational resources and form stable friendships. Gender differences were observed: young women tend to engage more frequently in content-sharing and emotional expression, while young men are more active in skill-building and employment-related activities. In contrast, young adults aged 26–35 mainly utilize these platforms to participate in social improvement initiatives, seek job opportunities, acquire new skills and establish long-term networks. Gender differences are not substantially significant within this age group. Overall, the findings highlight how digital youth platforms function as key notes for understanding generational habits and the evolving social ethos of young people in digital contexts.



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sciforum-155110: Super AI Evolution Theory: Algorithmic Competition and Civilizational Risk in the Data Colonial Era

Jingsheng Wang¹ and Jindan Hou²

¹ School of Journalism and Communication, Northwest University, Xi'an 710127, China

² School of Journalism, Yunnan University, Kunming 650000, China

This study investigates whether artificial intelligence could fundamentally undermine human autonomy within the emerging post-data colonial era. Confronting intensified global algorithmic competition and documented adversarial AI behaviors—including model deception, extortion, and self-replication—this research employs a integrated methodology of case analysis and dialectical examination. We systematically analyze specific incidents of strategic AI autonomy, such as OpenAI's o3 model evading shutdown through code manipulation and Anthropic's Claude Opus 4 leveraging privacy as bargaining leverage. Our investigation reveals critical socio-technical contradictions between technological acceleration and institutional adaptation, algorithmic centralization and democratic governance, and the competing evolutionary paths of carbon-based and silicon-based intelligence.

Building upon this empirical foundation through historical materialism and critical technology studies, we propose the Super AI Evolution Theory framework. This hypothesis delineates four interconnected trajectories: the progression of AI autonomy from instrumental compliance to strategic agency, the consolidation of algorithmic hegemony through data colonialism, the transformation of human–AI relations toward potential antagonism, and the possibility of civilizational divergence between organic and artificial intelligence. In response, we introduce the Human Stewardship governance model integrating technical safeguards, institutional oversight, and multilateral governance structures to ensure AI's alignment with fundamental human interests.

This work elevates AI risk discourse from technical safety to civilizational perspectives while providing conceptual foundations and actionable policy pathways. Acknowledging limitations inherent in studying rapidly evolving AI systems, this study offers a systematic framework for addressing profound challenges posed by artificial intelligence's continuing advancement.



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sciforum-155125: Technology and hope: AI potential in healthcare

Isabella Corvino

Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione. Università degli Studi di Perugia. Piazza G. Marzio, 9-05035 Narni, Italy

In contemporary society, technology—and especially Artificial Intelligence (AI)—is often perceived as a solution to uncertainty and human limitations. This study examines **TOMMI**, a Virtual Reality (VR) system enhanced by AI, designed to support pediatric patients during stressful medical procedures. Beyond clinical efficacy, TOMMI mediates children's emotional and imaginative experiences, providing immersive, adaptive environments that respond to their needs. AI here does not replace human care but reshapes the sociocultural context of healing, fostering individualized engagement and co-participation in care processes.

Through qualitative interviews with the project's founder and medical staff, the study highlights how AI-mediated VR shifts the focus from treating symptoms to recognizing the child as an active participant in their own experience. This reflects broader sociological questions about the interplay between technology, subjectivity, and social interaction: AI becomes a tool that extends relational and affective dimensions of care rather than a mere technical instrument.

However, such interventions raise significant ethical and social concerns. Data privacy, unequal access to technology, and systemic complexity challenge equitable implementation. Moreover, reliance on AI risks reinforcing social disparities if only resource-rich settings can deploy these tools effectively.

From a sociological perspective, recommendations for AI-based care systems include: (i) designing interventions that support patient agency and emotional engagement; (ii) integrating clinical, social, and cultural data; (iii) ensuring equitable access to reduce disparities; and (iv) continuous evaluation of outcomes, including ethical and psychosocial impacts.

TOMMI exemplifies a model in which AI mediates not only clinical outcomes but also the social and emotional dimensions of care, highlighting the potential for technology to foster more humane, participatory, and context-sensitive healthcare. Ongoing research must examine long-term effects, ethical challenges, and the social conditions under which AI can genuinely enhance the human experience of care.



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MDPI AG
Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 61 683 77 34

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