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# Needs of Older Adults Facing the Loss of Autonomy and Technological Responses: a Case Study of Social Robots in Long-term Care Facilities in Japan

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## Résumé

In our ageing society, one of the most pressing social issues is the care of older adults who have lost their autonomy. Those older adults can be considered to be age-related disabled individuals (WHO 2015). Attempts have been made to provide some solutions for the care of older adults who have lost their autonomy, with the help of technology and robotics. A number of quantitative studies have been conducted using an evaluative approach to examine the needs of these older adults, and many qualitative studies have also been conducted using anthropological methods to describe the relationship between caregivers and care recipients in situations involving technology and robots. This presentation focuses on the needs of care providers and care recipients who have used a social robot in a long-term care facility. Specifically, this presentation examines interactions between caregivers, facility residents, and robots to understand how social robots can shape care activities and care relationships. According to the participant observation and interviews conducted in Japan, the director of a care home adopted a social robot, and caregivers frequently used it to assist them in carrying out their duties. The robot enabled the care staff to avoid encountering resistance from residents most of whom are cognitively impaired older adults, fostering physical activity and hence contributing to protecting (and/or monitoring) these residents's body. In contrast, while some care recipients chose to interact with it to seek their autonomy, others did not feel a strong need to do so. Similarly, when caregivers were faced with a conflict between the needs of caring for multiple residents at the same time, they did not turn to the robot either. The originality of this presentation lies in its focus on the needs and power relations of this micro-level of care, as well as on the conflicting needs of caregivers embedded in several different relationship dynamics. Identifying the needs of cognitively impaired older adults and addressing them could help to explain and understand the cases of resistance to technologies and, consequently, innovation.

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