Qualitative research on perceptions of older people to our evolving society

To what extent do older people feel included in society: their perceptions towards trends, our youth and their sense of security.
2 qualitative researches

1. Qualitative research into the perception of older people in relation to trends in society

2. Qualitative research on single women over 70 years concerning safety in and around the house
1. Perceptions towards trends

Qualitative research into the perception of older people in relation to trends in society changing eating habits
Perceptions towards trends: Changing eating habits

Background

- The target audience for new trends (for example: fast food restaurants) are and remain especially for youth and young adults.
Background

- Foods labeled “for seniors” is seen as unattractive, both young and old find this unattractive.
Background

- Influence WW II: By rising incomes and new eating habits: meat consumption increased explosively.
Perceptions towards trends: 
Changing eating habits

Method

- **Qualitative study**
  - phenomenological philosophy
  - In-depth semi-structured interview

- **Inclusion criteria**
  - Flemish elderly born around 1930
  - Dutch speaking
  - Community dwelling
  - Active: can move both indoors and outdoors

- **Exclusion criteria**
  - People with dementia, neurological disorders, diabetes, mental retardation and people in a wheelchair.
Perceptions towards trends: Changing eating habits

- **Results**
  - Trends in society: intra-cultural / intercultural / intergenerational
  - Meaning
  - Food preferences and meal structure
  - Autonomy
  - Social and physical factors
  - Effects of multimedia
Results

- **Intra-cultural**
  - They don`t take the initiative to go to fast food restaurants, but they do so well with children / grandchildren
  - Not negative about vegetarians
  - More positive about frozen foods, than about prepared meals.
Results

Intercultural

- Noticed that the elderly perceived positively the eating habits of other cultures
- They find Chinese/Italian restaurant accessible
Results

Intergenerational

• According our research people the youth buy too impulsive, this caused them to advertising industry. This all leads to food waste.

• Quote (D.D.,85 years) :

  "During the war our principle was that we always could make something new from old food. Me made for example “lost bread”, a new dish of our old bread. We NEVER threw something away"
Results

➤ Meaning

- In their education the elders have learned to conserve handle money
- They find rituals very important
  → etiquette rules

  Quote (M.M., 83 years) “Yes I'm frustrated when people do not follow the etiquette rules. Of course you have people who can’t help it that they sit crooked. But still I want everyone to eat a bit posh. So we raised. Someone who sits slurping his soup, yes that breaks my appetite”
Results

Food preferences and meal structure

- Great importance to consume three full meals a day
- Priorities: the meal have to be healthy, well prepared, sufficient in quantity and the taste has to be good.
Results

Autonomy in the choice of food

- Older people want to decide as autonomous as possible their choice of meal
- As long as they can do everything themselves, they accept no help

Help from their children or grandchildren is seen as an exception.
Perceptions towards trends:
Changing eating habits

Results

➤ Effects of multimedia
  • Small influence eating behaviors/ purchasing behavior
  • Influence cooking programs
Perceptions towards trends:
Changing eating habits

Results

➢ Social and physical factors

• Eating alone: a habit?
• Taste
• Decreased appetite
• Disturbing elements
Perceptions towards trends:
Changing eating habits

- **Conclusion**
  - Inaccessible trends
  - Media /food chains rarely focus to the elderly population
  - No big fans of fast food, but they do like food from other cultures
  - Children/grandchildren bring the elderly closer to new trends
  - Elderly use frozen meals but are not familiar with prepared meals
  - Choice of meal autonomous as possible
  - Research persons find that the youth cannot properly handle money, that they handle to impulsive and that they give too much money to buy food
Sense of security

Qualitative research on single women over 70 years concerning safety in and around the house.
Background

- Safety is a basic human right!!
- Older people feel more insecure than young people. And women feel more insecure than men.
- Studies have shown that the most fearful elderly are often those who do not belong to the risk groups.
- The media exerts a major role in the perception of the elderly and safety.
Sense of security

Background

- Other determinants of the feeling of safety:
  - Education
  - Any previous victim experience
  - Composition of the family
- Social life of people= social environment often reduces to family and neighbors
- There is a strong correlation between 'loneliness' and' perception of safety. Lonely elderly often feel unsafe or not lonely seniors.
**Sense of security**

**Background**

- Older people who live in urban areas feel more unsafe indoor during the evening and at night than older people living in non-urban areas.
- Seniors with only their pension income feel less safe than those with a higher socioeconomic status.
Numerical data

Older people are at first afraid of becoming a victim of crime in **traffic**, followed by the fear of **burglary**. In third place comes the fear on the streets **robbed of wallet or purse**: On an annual basis, 1.77% of the elderly actually confronted with a burglar and is 0.95% of the 70-year slaughter cool of physical violence. For comparison with the 14-49 year olds is this 3.67%.

(Geerts, C., & Vandenhove, L., 2007)
Security paradox/ ‘fear of crime” paradox

The classic paradox of "fear of crime" is double and refers to the adoption of quantitative empirical research where women and elderly report a higher "fear of crime", then, based on crime statistics and victim surveys is shown. This paradox also laid down that men and youths reported lower anxiety levels, while they objectively have a higher risk of victimization. (Jackson,2004;Jewkes,2004;Pleysier,2009)

Women, the elderly, ethnic minorities and socio-economic disadvantaged persons report each time a higher ‘fear of crime’. (Hale,1996; Killias,1990; skogan &Maxfield,1981)
Security paradox/ “fear of crime” paradox

We do not communicate (good) about the security paradox towards older people. We often remain silent about the bare figures for fear of unintended consequences" (Geerts,C., & Vandenhove,L., 2007)
Sense of security

- Security paradox/ ‘fear of crime” paradox

“fear of crime paradox”\(\rightleftharpoons\) consequences of victimization for the elderly, as for women are bigger! (Elchardus et al. 2003)
Method

- **Qualitative study**
  - phenomenological philosophy
  - In-depth semi-structured interview

- **Inclusion criteria**
  - Belgian Nationality, living in Flanders
  - Dutch speaking elderly
  - Living independently at home
  - Active: can move both indoors and outdoors
  - Older than 70 years

- **Exclusion criteria**
  - People with dementia, neurological disorders, diabetes, mental retardation and people in a wheelchair.
  - People who lived in a particular setting (nursing home, residential care center, ...)

Sense of security
Sense of security

Results

- Feeling of insecurity increases as a person gets older.
- Sense of insecurity is higher in large cities.
- Everyone in the research group came already in contact with aggression in traffic.
- They find it a big difference to go outside during the day or going outside during the night.
- Women feel safer in groups.
- Feeling of safety increases when police presence.
Sense of security

Results

- feeling Safer with a partner
- Distrust towards counselors or handymen
- Lightening in and around the house, a big impact on sense of security
Conclusion

Due to the continuous and repeated negative characterization in the media, elderly people are going to behave so as to gain more control of their environment. Which in turn gives rise to insecurity and powerlessness.
Conclusion

The systematic negative stereotyping of older people is a form of psychological abuse.

Decisive task to work on a positive image for the elderly and positive examples to put forward!!
Discussion

- Small study of eight people, conducted by students
- Further research is needed
- Year theme Active Ageing
Discussion

- Task as an OT
  - Giving properly information
  - Break trough stereotypes
  - Taking the elderly a step closer to our society
  - Bringing small changes in society

Make the life of our elderly easier and optimize their quality of life!
Sources

Firt study
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- Franssen J., In mijn koffer op zoleder: levensverhalen van ouderen voor ouderen, Stafleu an Lunghum B., Houten, 2008
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Sources

second study

- Geerts C, (2007) Veiligheidsparadox bij ouderen, verkregen op (datum van opzoeken)
Thank you for the attention,

are there any questions?