



OA-INVOLVE

Older Adults' Active Involvement in Ageing
& Technology Research and Development

AGE-WELL

Older Adult's Involvement in AGE-WELL Projects A Survey – 2015-2016 Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

AGE-WELL projects strive to develop solutions that will help current and future generations of older adults (OAs) and their caregivers to live quality lives and enjoy independence, improved security, safety and social connectedness as they age. This requires the involvement of OAs.

Engaging OAs in technology research and development projects has several benefits including addressing OAs needs (1), improved early adoption and diffusion of the products and increased functionality, usability and quality of the products (2), which have been recognized by the management and researchers affiliated with the AGE-WELL network. As such, OA involvement is a cornerstone of the AGE-WELL network.

THE OA-INVOLVE PROJECT

OA-INVOLVE is an AGE-WELL Project and stands for Older Adults' Active Involvement in Aging and Technology Research and Development. The project focuses on understanding the ways in

which OAs are involved in the technology research and development process, from research inception, proposal writing, right through to the development and commercialization of technology knowledge, products, policies and services. Guidelines will be developed to aid projects involving OAs in various roles, including as participants, advisors and co-producers (decision-makers) throughout the technology research and development process continuum.

AGE-WELL PROJECTS SURVEY

OA-INVOLVE conducted an email survey inviting all AGE-WELL projects leads to describe basic aspects of engaging OAs in their work. The idea was to collect information on current practices before we move to more complex engagement descriptions and projects interviews. It was also intended to provide the AGE-WELL projects with a clear picture of current OA engagement practices across the network. This is not an exhaustive analysis but rather a snapshot of current practices and future plans.

OA-INVOLVE surveyed fellow AGE-WELL investigators, research leads and managers about current practices and future plans for engaging older adults in their activities.

We intend to reproduce this survey annually to document change in OA engagement practices across the AGE-WELL network over time.

SURVEY PROCESS

The survey questions were emailed to AGE-WELL leads during the period of April – August 2016. We emailed 35 projects, including the leads or co-leads, the crosscutting activities leads (N=4) and the AGE-WELL Network management office (N=1). We received responses from all teams. Projects were followed up by email or phone when clarification was needed. (See survey questions on page 3).

WHERE IS AGE-WELL RESEARCH TAKING PLACE?

Research is taking place in a wide range of environments, such as First Nations communities, university laboratories, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, retirement facilities, libraries, community centers, malls, and research centers. Two projects are classified as virtual sites, as their research consists of phone/internet interviews with OAs.

The majority of the research activities involving OAs directly are taking place in Ontario (Figure 1). Thirteen projects are carrying out research activities in Toronto, 6 in Ottawa, and 3 in London and Waterloo.

Four projects report their research is taking place in the Vancouver area, British Columbia, and 3 in Montreal, Quebec. Thirteen other cities across Canada house research activities. At the time of the survey no research activities involving OAs were reported in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, PEI, Manitoba and the Territories.

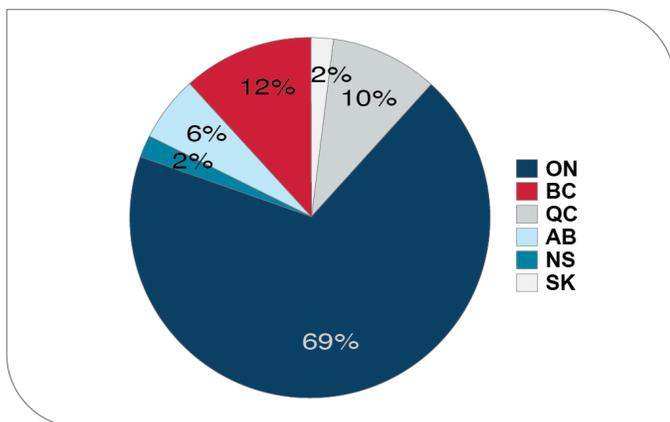


Figure 1. Percentage of research activities reported to take place per province.

INVOLVEMENT ROLES

OAs are involved in AGE-WELL projects in all three roles: as participants, advisors or co-producers (decision-makers). Some projects will involve OAs in more than one role during the project's duration.



OLDER ADULTS ARE INVOLVED IN AGE-WELL NETWORK GOVERNANCE

AGE-WELL Network involves OAs in decision-maker roles in three different Governance Committees. Older adults also serve as advisors in network mentorship workshops.

ALMOST ALL AGE-WELL PROJECTS INVOLVE OLDER ADULTS IN A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT ROLE

Among the 39 AGE-WELL Projects/CCs, 36 either currently involve or plan to involve OAs. Of these, the majority indicates that they will involve OAs in a participant role. Involving OAs as advisors and co-producers (decision-makers) is not as frequently practiced (38% and 28%, respectively). Some Projects/CCs involve OAs in multiple roles. Twenty-one Projects/CCs (54%) intend to involve OAs as participants. Four Projects (10%) intend to involve OAs as participants and advisors and 10 Projects (26%) intend to involve OAs as participants, advisors and co-producers (Figure 2).

Note: Definitions of participants, advisors, and co-producers were not provided in the survey but were clarified upon request.

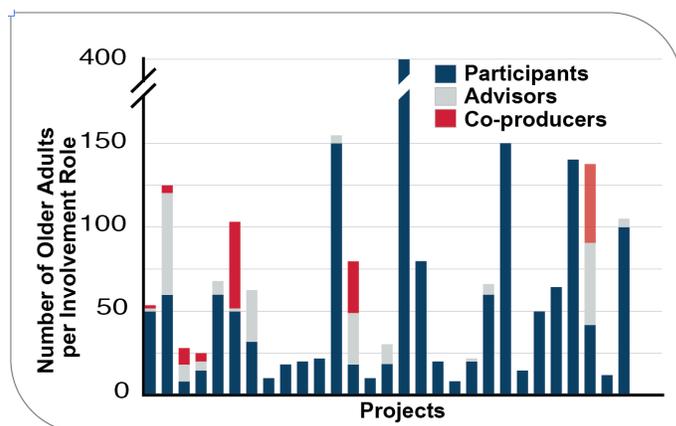


Figure 2. Number of OAs per involvement role - current and planned involvement combined. Some OAs can have multiple roles. Three of the Projects/CCs reported no plan to involve OAs, and 7 projects indicated that they involve OAs, but did not provide the numbers of OAs – these projects were not included in this chart.

The majority of AGE-WELL teams engage older adults in their projects. OA-INVOLVE will support research teams to move along the involvement continuum towards greater engagement of OAs in the advisory and decision-making roles.

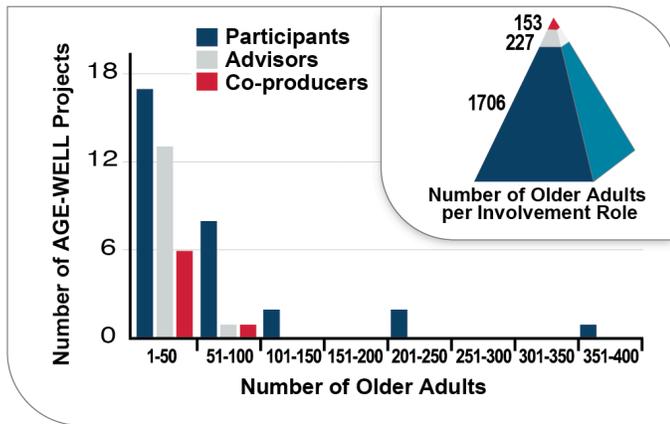


Figure 3. Number of projects involving OAs per enrolment size and role - current and planned involvement combined. Some OAs can have multiple roles. Quantitative data was not provided by 7 projects.

SEVEN OF THE PROJECTS INVOLVE OLDER ADULTS IN ALL 3 ROLES. THE MAJORITY OF THE PROJECTS WORK WITH LESS THAN 50 OLDER ADULTS

Current and planned OA involvement reported by the Projects/CCs included:

- 1706 (82%) - Participants
- 227 (11%) - Advisors
- 153 (7%) - Co-producers
- 2086 in total in the above roles

Note: When response to number of OAs involved was a range; the maximum number of OAs indicated on the survey was used. This is an estimate as recruitment is ongoing and there may be multiple study sites or study phases.

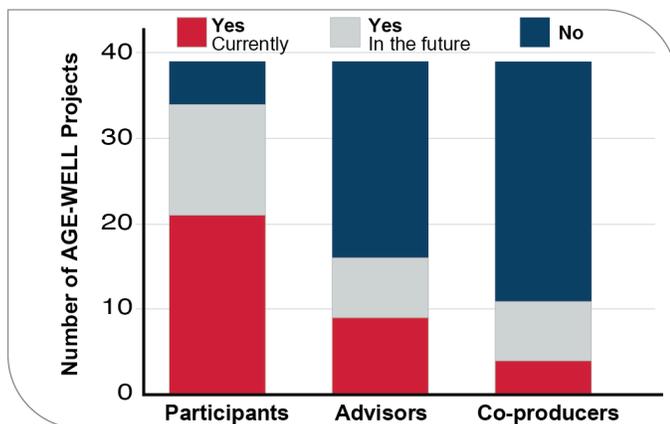


Figure 4. Number of projects involving OAs per involvement role - current and planned involvement. Some OAs can have multiple roles.

APPROXIMATELY A QUARTER OF PROJECTS PLAN TO INVOLVE MORE OLDER ADULTS IN THE FUTURE

The majority of projects currently involve OAs in a participant role (23), and only 4 projects indicated that they do not plan to increase numbers of participants. OA advisors are involved in 9 projects; an additional 6 projects reported on plans to recruit advisors. The involvement of OAs in the decision-making (co-producers) role is less frequent among AGE-WELL projects. At the time of survey, only 4 projects involved OAs as decision-makers, and 7 planned to recruit OAs into decision-making roles in the future.

REFERENCES

1. Wherton J., Sugarhood P., Procter R., Hinder S., & Greenhalgh T. (2015). Implementation Science (10): 75, pp.1-10.
2. Shah S.G.S. & Robinson I. (2007). International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care (23): 1, pp. 131-137.

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Where is your research taking place (specific sites)?
2. Do you currently involve OAs in any capacity?
 - As research participants?
 - As advisors in the research process?
 - As co-producers in the research process?
3. If so, how many older adults are involved in your project in the above capacities?
4. If you don't currently involve OAs, do you have plans to do so in the future? How many?

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