

Grant recipient: Dr Fiona Maclean
Grant: Research Priority Grant 2024
Title of project: Co-creating the future: the use of multifunctional robots in occupational therapy and dementia

Abstract:

Dementia is a complex condition which can cause a diverse range of symptoms that impact everyday life for the person living with dementia, including their families, caregivers, and supporters. Access to rehabilitation offered by allied health professionals (AHPs), including occupational therapists, can enhance outcomes for people with dementia. More recently, rehabilitation has included technological solutions, with increased interest in how, and in what way, robots can be used in practice. However, whilst literature in occupational therapy indicates the potential value of robots to practice, often the views of those living with dementia, their caregivers, including therapists themselves, have been ignored.

This study seeks to co-design a project in partnership with people with dementia, their caregivers, and occupational therapists. The aim is to capture views on the potential use of robots in dementia and to understand if robots can support meaningful person-centred participation in our everyday activities to enhance rehabilitation outcomes in dementia.

This study will include the creation of a survey, distributed to occupational therapists across the United Kingdom (UK), to capture existing professional knowledge and awareness of the potential use of robots in dementia practice. We will also deliver a number of practical workshop(s) at the National Robotarium, Scotland, to show examples of robots, and to gather participant views on how they could be used in practice. We will also place the robots in the Alzheimer Dementia Resource Centre in Scotland and explore how users, caregivers and team members in the facility interact with the device.