

## David Neal at the International Psychogeriatric Association conference in Lisbon: APH Aging and Later Life Travel Grant 2023

I was delighted to receive an APH travel grant to attend the IPA conference in Lisbon this year, from 29<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The conference brought together over 600 participants from around the world to discuss the latest developments in mental health and psychosocial care for older people.

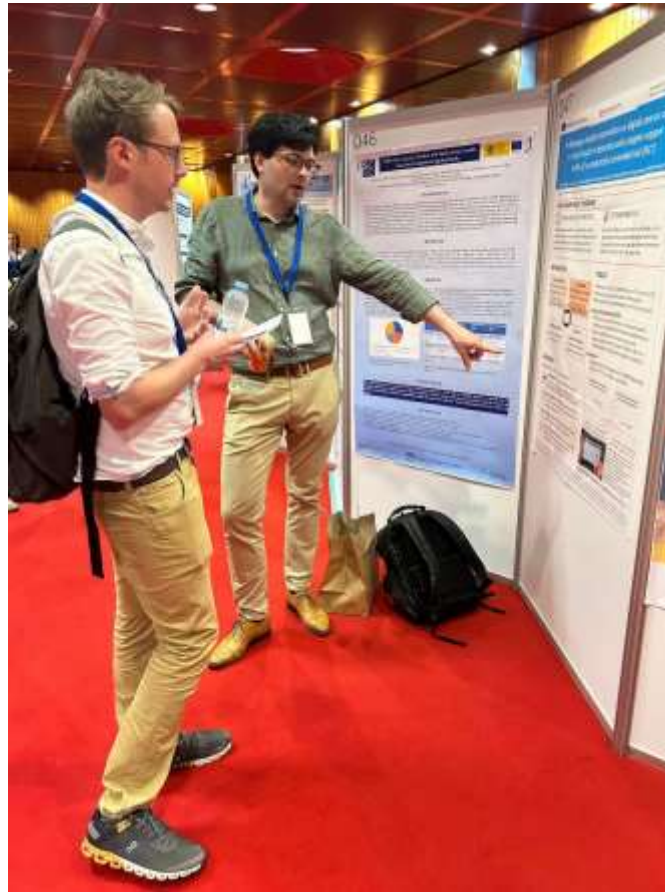
Amongst many esteemed psychiatrists, geriatricians, psychologists, occupational therapists, and researchers from diverse disciplines, I was proud to lead a workshop on the maturity lifecycle of assistive technologies in dementia care. Together with colleagues from the European Marie Skłodowska-Curie DISTINCT Innovative Training Network, within which my PhD research has taken place, we showcased our results on all phases from conceptualization, feasibility testing, formal evaluation and implementation of digital tools in dementia care.



We were delighted by how engaged the workshop participants were, with lively debates emerging around the relative merits of universal design (making all technologies accessible for all people) vs. person-centered design of technologies specifically for certain user-groups such as people with dementia.

I was also able to present a poster on the results of the randomized controlled trial, which has been the focus of my PhD research. Presenting the poster led to some promising connections for the future, with researchers from groups in the UK, Japan, the USA, and Israel, to name a few.

With respect to both of my own contributions to the conference, I was very pleased that our research was felt to have such global relevance, and it was a privilege to be representing Amsterdam UMC and APH on that stage.



As well as sharing my own work I was also really inspired by attending a number of informative plenaries and symposia. A few highlights were:

- The launch of a Lancet commission on personalized long-term care through a human rights lens. This esteemed committee is in a position to have a global impact on the future of long-term care for older people.
- An excellent keynote by Rose Marie Droës, re-emphasizing the value of psychosocial care in dementia.
- A symposium on the potential benefits of innovative care environments (e.g. Green care farms).
- INTERDEM Chair Marjolein de Vugt and Sube Bannerjee's presentations on the role of social connectedness in dementia and why medications are not generally effective for treating neuropsychiatric symptoms in dementia.

Finally, as a very concrete outcome of the conference for me personally, I was honored to be invited to support a senior member of the influential European INTERDEM network in developing the new INTERDEM roadmap for future research on psychosocial care in dementia.



Lisbon was a delightful city. With its vibrant nightlife and warm, welcoming locals, the city provided a charming backdrop for networking and unwinding after thought-provoking sessions.

Once again, I have to thank APH for making all of this possible! And as I look back on the memories that I'll take away, I'm reminded to look forward, to further developing relationships with new contacts and to new research and collaboration opportunities.