

Synergium

A new interdisciplinary living lab dedicated to innovation in gerontological care

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Introduction

By 2070, the Canadian population aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 7 millions in 2022 to approximately 14 millions.^{1,2} The rapid population aging is accompanied by a rise in neurocognitive disorders : in Canada, the number of affected individuals was estimated at approximately 600,000 in 2020 and is projected to reach 1,7 million by 2050.³ Adults aged over 65 and over also experience other concerns in relation with the process of ageing (i.e. grief, ageism, chronic diseases, etc) and population aging is also associated with an increasing complexity in gerontological care.

Aim

The living lab **Synergium** aims to advance gerontological care and aging-related practices through a practice transformation approach based in co-construction with the members of the living lab.

Methods

- By leveraging local and international collaborations, the living lab created a structured space for innovation and reflection that brings together :

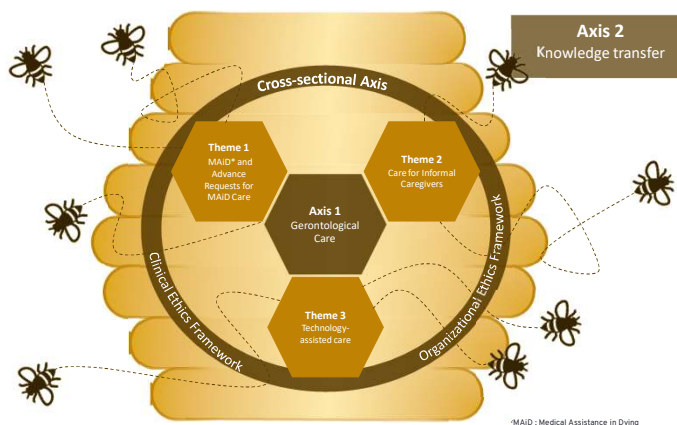


- The activities are based on participatory approaches, including focus groups, reflection workshops, participations circles and co-creation workshops.
- Participation and collective decision-making are supported by a range of tools, including real-time translation (Wordly) and electronic voting (REDCap).



Axis and themes

Co-creation activities and collective voting processes made it possible to identify the central focus of the living, centered on gerontological care, as well as three priority research themes :



Partnership charter (Brave Space)

Principles	
1. Value the diversity of knowledge.	7. Use "I" statements to share personal experiences.
2. Share knowledge to enrich a collective reflection.	8. Ensure everyone has a voice to promote participation.
3. Bring perspectives together to build a more representative vision.	9. Respect the confidentiality of sensitive discussions.
4. Share opinions in a respectful manner.	10. Grow together by aiming for progress rather than perfection
5. Prioritize co-construction over debate.	
6. Listen with an open mind.	

- This charter aims to create a respectful environment where everyone can express themselves, listen and learn with confidence. It is grounded in the "brave space" approach, which encourages honest expression, open listening and the inclusion of diverse perspectives to foster dialogue and collaborative knowledge-building.

- The charter was co-developed through a participatory and iterative process, drawing on the literature and on reflective workshops conducted with the living lab members.

Governance system

- This governance system aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities to facilitate collaboration and decision-making within the living lab.
- The RASCI model is used to identify everyone's role for each project or activity :
 - Authority/Accountable : makes the final decision
 - Responsible : carries out or coordinates the project
 - Support : provides assistances or resources to the project
 - Consulted : is asked to provide input or expertise
 - Informed : is kept up to date on progress and decisions.
- The system was developed based on a literature review and reflective workshops within the executive committee and was then collectively validated.

Name of the project:

Short description

A - Autorité Authority	R - Responsable Responsible
S - Soutien Support	C - Consulté Consulted
I - Informé Informed	Pas intéressé Not interested

Conclusion

The living lab **Synergium** supports innovation and co-construction in gerontological care through its axis and themes, a partnership charter and a RASCI governance model that foster trust, participation and engagement.

Our future goal is to consolidate these achievements through the implementation of structuring projects and the expansion of collaborations.

References

- ¹Statistics Canada. Tablea 17-10-0005-01. Population estimates by age and gender.
²Statistics Canada. 2022. Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories : Interactive Dashboard
³Statistics Canada. 2017. The National Population Health Study of Neurological Conditions

