
FNAQPA GERONFOR facilitates simulation

GERONFOR, the training facility of EAHSA member FNAQPA, has a longstanding experience in the training of care professionals and managers. It trains 8.500 professionals yearly. The ageing simulation is a relative new activity.

GERONFOR's Anne-Marie Jarnieux and Sebastien Bourbon facilitated the simulation session at the EAHSA General Assembly Meeting in Brussels and successfully turned the EAHSA members in older persons themselves. More information about age simulation sessions can be found at the website of [GERONFOR](#).

'Look at what older persons can do, not what they can't'

Ageing simulation is a perfect exercise to understand the limitations that come with growing older. 'But we have to keep looking at what older persons can do, and not at what they can't do', says Didier Sapy, CEO of FNAQPA and EAHSA Board member. What is important in order to create a feeling of homeliness for older people? How can the care givers, the physical house and the person's environment contribute to that? 'EAHSA and its members are committed to create a pleasant and foremost a supportive environment for older people', says Aad Koster, EAHSA President.

The importance of simulation

How many care professionals and care managers have true experience with ageing? And how many do adapt their practice and services to these experiences?

To better understand the needs and difficulties encountered when aging, EAHSA has invited FNAQPA GERONFOR at the 2015 Annual General Meeting on 7 december 2015 to facilitate the simulation of ageing. In order to be able to better understand the needs of older persons and to develop empathy, the EAHSA AGM participants put themselves in the shoes of the elderly persons by using a specially designed age-simulation suit.

'Among architects and professional care givers awareness is growing of the importance of feeling at home in residential care environments, rather than just having basic needs like food, shelter, and medical care met', says Aad Koster, EAHSA President. 'Age simulation as a must for providers.'



EAHSA Board simulates ageing

At the occasion of the 2015 Annual General Meeting, the EAHSA Board and members simulate ageing and undergo the difficulties and restrictions of getting old.



“Getting older means also getting less mobile and less independent. It’s good to know how that feels when designing and providing our services.”



The Ageing Simulation Suit suits everyone

The age simulation suit is indispensable for age simulation as it offers the opportunity to experience impairments of older persons, even for younger people. It simulates age-related impairments like opacity of the eye lens, narrowing of the visual field, high-frequency hearing loss, head mobility restrictions, joint stiffness, the loss of strength, reduced grip ability, and reduced coordination skills.



Eating as an 80-years old person

Fabian Toussaint, CEO of the Belgian MMI, is trying to eat like an 80-years old person during lunch of the 2015 EAHSA AGM. Heavy weights around neck, arms and legs hinder flexible movements. Picking up fork and knife become a true expedition. Special glasses simulate the loss of sight and make the tasty dish served for lunch un-attractive. ‘I can’t distinguish fork and knife very well and it looks all the same on my plate. I have no idea of what I’ll have for lunch’, says Fabian. Sebastien Bourbon of GERONFOR explains the importance of clear and traditional table settings and the need for different colors in dishes to make eating more attractive.

Some fact & figures about older persons

According to an EU survey, 85% agrees that older people can’t live autonomously in current housing circumstances. On average, only 1% of all residences are barrier-free or adapted to the needs of older people. Within the EU, the majority of those aged 65 and older live alone (31.1%) or as a couple (48.3%).



Drinking as a Parkinson patient

Christine Merzeder, EAHSA Board member, can’t believe the difficulties Parkinson patients encounter when drinking. Special gloves bring electric tensions to her nerves and muscles and cause heavy tremblings. It is by mere good-luck that she didn’t spoil her clothes when trying to drink a glass of water.

The gloves provide insight into how limitations in hand movement can affect product use. Such limitations can be caused by various conditions such as arthritis and Parkinson disease. The gloves can build empathy with users, and can be used to examine the accessibility of products and services.