

FROM TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTION TO WARM PROTECTION: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERS THE INNOVATION OF THE HOME-BASED ELDERLY CARE MODEL AND THE RETURN OF HUMANITIES

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ABSTRACT

In the context of an aging population, the choice of elderly care model directly determines the quality of life and subjective well-being of older adults in their later years. This issue has thus become a major social concern, one that extends beyond individual families to reflect the resilience and inclusiveness of society at large. Traditional home-based care struggles to cope with the challenges posed by an aging society. The introduction of digital technology offers new solutions for home-based care. It not only enhances the efficiency and quality of care services but also meets the personalized and diverse needs of the elderly. This article starts from the practice of digital technology intervening in home-based elderly care, combs out the challenges and coping strategies in this field, and discusses the future direction of digital home-based elderly care. The purpose is to promote digital home-based elderly care from simple application of technical tools to a guardian model that combines professional efficiency and emotional temperature, and provides a reference for optimizing the home-based elderly care service system and improving the well-being of the elderly.

INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of profound changes in global demographics, population aging has become one of the most challenging global issues of the 21st century. According to UN statistics in 1980, the population aged 65 and above was 260 million, reaching 761 million in 2021 and 8 billion in 2022, with a significant increase in the aging population. It is expected to increase to 1.6 billion by 2050, with the population aged 80 and above growing even faster (Population Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022). This demographic shift is not unique to any one region, but rather a systemic change affecting the entire globe. However, the degree of aging varies significantly across countries: as of 2022, the global aging rate is about 9.8%, 19.2% in high-income countries, and 12.2% in middle- and upper-middle-income countries. Japan is one of the countries with serious aging problems, with a population of 65 years and above accounting for nearly 30%, and the proportion of people aged 80 and above is increasing. South Korea has entered a super-aged society in December 2024, with the proportion of people aged 65 and above exceeding 20% (Statistics Korea, 2025). China entered an aging society in 2000, and the proportion of people aged 65 and above in 2023 was 15.4%. It is expected that the proportion will exceed 20% in 2030 and enter a super-aged society (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Population aging not only signifies a simple increase in the number of elderly people, but also profoundly reflects changes in the social support structure, rising demand for medical resources, a shrinking labor supply, and pressure on the pension system. Against this backdrop, effectively addressing the challenges of aging in a society has become a focal point for governments and societies worldwide. Among various elder care models, home-based elder care is gaining increasing attention due to its unique advantages. Compared to institutional elder care, home-based elder care allows seniors to maintain familiar lifestyles and close relationships with family members in a familiar environment, which is invaluable for their mental health and emotional well-being (Wang, L. J., & Zhang, J. G., 2023).

At the same time, the rapid development of digital technology has provided new possibilities for home-based elderly care. The maturity and integration of technologies such as the Internet of Things, big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence are profoundly changing the supply

mode and quality level of traditional elderly care services (Zhao, Z. G., & Li, M. H., 2024). Digital solutions such as smart home systems, wearable health monitoring devices, telemedicine services, and diversified social platforms provide technical support for solving the core problems of home-based elderly care, such as safety monitoring, health management, and spiritual companionship (Chen, S. Y., & Liu, W., 2023). However, the application of digital technology in the field of home-based elderly care is not smooth sailing. Problems such as insufficient age-appropriate technology, lack of digital literacy among the elderly (Zhang, H. F., & Chen, J. Q., 2024), privacy and security concerns, and mismatch between product and service needs are still prominent (Liu, M., & Yang, X. Y., 2024).

Based on the above background, this article aims to systematically review the current application status, challenges, and countermeasures of digital technology in home-based elderly care. By analyzing typical cases, it explores the future development direction of digital home-based elderly care, in order to provide reference for theoretical research and practical exploration of smart elderly care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research subjects: This study covers three levels: First, the technology level, including the application forms of digital technologies in home-based elderly care scenarios such as IoT (Internet of Things technology) smart home systems, wearable health monitoring devices, telemedicine platforms, AI-assisted decision-making systems, social interaction platforms, and intelligent service robots (Zhao, Z. G., & Li, M. H., 2024); Second, the subject level, including the elderly population living at home, social workers providing elderly care services, community medical staff, family members, and employees of elderly care service institutions (Lin, F., & Wang, H., 2025); Third, the model level, including innovative practices such as the "social work + property management + home-based elderly care" integrated model, the smart elderly care service platform model, and the community-embedded elderly care service model. The geographical scope of the study covers Japan, European countries, and China, and the time span mainly focuses on the application practices of digital technology in elderly care from 2020 to the present.

Research methodology: This study adopts a qualitative research method combining literature review and case analysis.

(1). **Literature research method:** This study systematically retrieved and organized academic papers, government reports, industry white papers, and statistical data on topics such as population aging, home-based elderly care models, and digital technology applications for elderly care both domestically and internationally (The Japanese Cabinet Office is not the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2024). The main sources of data include authoritative statistical materials such as the United Nations Population Division's Aging Population Database, the National Bureau of Statistics of China's population census data, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's White Paper on Aging Society, as well as relevant literature from academic databases such as CNKI, Web of Science, PubMed, etc. from 2020 to 2026. Through a systematic review of literature, this study has extracted seven application advantages, six categories of challenges, and corresponding multidimensional response strategies for digital technology intervention in home-based elderly care.

(2). **Case analysis method:** This study selected representative domestic and foreign smart elderly care practice cases for in-depth analysis. At the international level, select Japan's IoT based health monitoring and early warning system and European countries' smart home environment renovation plans (European Commission, 2023); At the Chinese level, typical cases such as the "One Click" emergency call device service in Hongkou District, Shanghai (Shanghai Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, 2022), the diversified smart home care platform of Zhejiang Province's fluorite network (Zhejiang Provincial Department of Economy and Information Technology, 2025), and the "Big Data Cloud Guardian" silver haired population care algorithm platform of Fujian Mobile (Fujian Mobile Communications Co., Ltd., 2024) were selected. The selection of cases follows the principles of typicality, representativeness, and information richness. Through a comprehensive analysis of the

case background, technical solutions, service models, and implementation effects, the diverse paths of digital technology empowering home-based elderly care are revealed.

(3). Comparative research method and trend analysis method: This study also adopted a comparative research method to compare and analyze the different development models of smart elderly care in Japan, Europe, and China, identifying the advantages and applicable conditions of each model; At the same time, using trend analysis method, based on the current technological development trend and population structure change data, we look forward to the future evolution direction of digital home-based elderly care (Lin, F., & Wang, H., 2025).

Research Materials: The materials used in this study mainly include: Official statistical data on population aging released by the United Nations and government statistical departments of various countries; Research papers in the field of smart elderly care published in domestic and foreign academic journals; Policy documents and industry reports on elderly care services issued by government departments; The technology white paper and public case materials of smart elderly care products released by enterprises; Relevant technical standards published by standard organizations such as the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) (International Electrotechnical Commission, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main challenges faced by digital technology in home-based elderly care

This study found that the promotion and implementation of digital technology in this field still face five major challenges :

(1). In terms of technological adaptability and transformation, it adopts a large font, high contrast, one-button operation design, combined with voice control, gesture recognition and other interactive methods, and supports dialect recognition and offline functions (Zhang, H. F., & Chen, J. Q., 2024).

(2). In terms of the construction of an inclusive support system, the government provides subsidies for the purchase of smart equipment, exempts network tariffs, sets up community science and technology service stations for the elderly (Zhu, Y., Jiao, G. X., & Wang, Y. C., 2024), and provides “technical on-site services” through volunteers.

(3). In terms of strengthening privacy protection, end-to-end encryption and anonymity are used to process health data, the boundaries of data collection are clarified through the "Personal Information Protection Law" and other regulations, and the anti-fraud awareness of the elderly is enhanced through case teaching (Liu, M., & Yang, X. Y., 2024).

(4). In product development, we adhere to a demand-oriented approach, prioritizing high-time-efficiency scenarios such as fall monitoring, chronic disease management, and remote consultations. Joint medical and psychological experts design products, and collect user feedback through pilot communities for continuous optimization.

(5). In terms of the integration of humanities and technology, it combines technical assistance with manual services (Chen, S. Y., & Liu, W., 2023). alleviates loneliness through virtual partners (while avoiding ethical disputes), and designs family sharing functions to enhance the emotional connection of technology (Lin, F., & Wang, H., 2025).

These challenges are not isolated but rather interconnected and mutually reinforcing systemic dilemmas. The digital divide and inadequate age-appropriate technology are mutually causal—inadequate devices exacerbate the technophobia of the elderly, which in turn reduces their willingness and motivation to use digital products, creating a vicious cycle. Similarly, cost pressures are closely related to the urban-rural gap in accessibility—high costs make it difficult to promote products to rural areas and low-income groups, while insufficient market size, in turn, restricts cost reduction. This necessitates a systemic approach in the response strategy, shifting from patching up individual links to collaborative governance across the entire chain.

Analysis of coping strategies

In response to the above challenges, this study proposes systematic coping strategies from five dimensions (Table1).

Table1. *Response strategies*

Strategies	Method	Specificmeasures
1.Technological transformation suitable for elderly people	(1).Simplify the interface	Use large fonts, high contrast, and one-touch operation design (such as emergency call button) (Zhang, H. F., & Chen, J. Q., 2024).
	(2).Multimodal interaction	Combine voice control, gesture recognition, and remote assistance functions (such as children helping parents set up devices through the App).
	(3).Localization adaptation	Support dialect recognition and develop low-cost offline functions (to cope with network instability).
2.Building a universal support system	(1).Policy subsidies	The government provides subsidies for the purchase of smart devices and waives network fees (such as Japan's "Silver Economy" special subsidy).
	(2).Community digital assistance	Establish technology service stations for the elderly and conduct regular training on the use of smart devices(Zhu, Y., Jiao, G. X., & Wang, Y. C.,2024).
	(3).Family-community linkage	Reduce learning costs by providing "on-site technical services" through community volunteers (Zhou, X. J., & Zheng, G. C., 2024)
3.Building a universal support system	(1).Technical aspects	Adopting end-to-end encryption and anonymization to process health data, local storage on devices takes priority over cloud storage.
	(2).Regulatory level	Clarify the boundaries of data collection (such as the Personal Information Protection Law, which refines the norms for the use of elderly data).
	(3).User Education	Enhancing the awareness of fraud prevention among the elderly through case studies (such as identifying fake health apps) (Liu, M., & Yang, X. Y., 2024)
4.Develop demand-driven products	(1).Core Function Focus	Prioritize the development of scenarios with urgent needs such as fall monitoring, chronic disease management, and remote consultation (Chen, S.Y., & Liu, W., 2023).
	(2).Interdisciplinary collaboration	Collaborate with medical and psychological experts to design products (such as GPS wristbands for elderly people with cognitive impairments to prevent them from getting lost) (World Health Organization.2023).
	(3).Feedback iteration mechanism	Collecting feedback from elderly users through pilot communities and continuously optimizing products (such as Xiaomi's "Elderly Mode").
5.Integration of Humanities and Technology	(1).Retain traditional services	Combining technical assistance with manual services (such as smart speakers reminding medication + regular home visits by community nurses) (Chen, S.Y., & Liu, Wei.2023).
	(2).Emotional Design	Alleviate loneliness through virtual companions (such as AI simulating voice interactions with loved ones), but avoid ethical controversies (Lin, F., & Wang, H., 2025).

Strategies	Method	Specificmeasures
	(3).Promote intergenerational interaction	Design home sharing features (such as children and grandchildren being able to use AR to teach the elderly how to use devices) to enhance emotional connections through technology (Lin, F., & Wang, H., 2025).

The above five strategies constitute a systematic solution that integrates technology, institutions, society, and humanities. However, the effective implementation of the strategy faces multiple constraints. Technological aging adaptation transformation requires enterprises to invest additional costs in product research and development. In the absence of mandatory standards, the internal driving force of enterprises is insufficient; The inclusive support system highly relies on the government's fiscal capacity, and under the pressure of economic downturn, the sustainability and coverage of special subsidies are facing challenges; There is an inherent tension between privacy protection and data utilization. Overly stringent data protection may undermine the effectiveness of health monitoring and AI analytics, whereas overly lax measures could infringe upon the rights of older adults. To reconcile the full realisation of data value with the protection of fundamental rights, a well-considered institutional design at both legislative and regulatory levels is urgently required.

Comparison of successful cases

This study analyzed representative cases of Japan, Europe, and China in the field of smart elderly care.

Japan:Targeting the characteristics of an aging society, Japan focuses on promoting smart wearable devices and health monitoring devices. Through IoT technology, these devices connect with medical institutions to track the physiological indicators of the elderly around the clock. When monitoring data exceeds safety thresholds, the system automatically triggers a three-tiered early warning mechanism, simultaneously notifying family members, community health stations, and emergency centers. The accompanying voice interaction system and online consultation platform effectively overcome the technical barriers for the elderly to operate smart devices (The Japanese Cabinet Office is not the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2024).

Europe: European countries have achieved significant results in smart environment transformation, improving the safety of elderly residents through integrated home control systems. The installation of biometric access control devices, adaptive lighting systems, and smart security networks not only optimizes the daily living experience but also builds a comprehensive protection system. Specially designed emergency response devices can provide immediate alarms for falls, sudden illnesses, and other emergencies, forming a linkage mechanism with community emergency services (European Commission, 2023).

China: The Chinese smart elderly care system shows a diversified innovation trend.The “One-Click” emergency call device in Hongkou District, Shanghai, integrates GPS positioning, fall detection and 120 linkage functions. 80% of the equipment cost is borne by the government (Shanghai Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, 2022). Zhejiang EZVIZ Network relies on the cloud platform to build a smart elderly care service system covering AI cameras and fall detection radar, covering safety monitoring, health management and spiritual comfort (Zhejiang Provincial Department of Economy and Information Technology.2025). Fujian Mobile pioneered the “Big Data Cloud Guardian” algorithm platform, which relies on AI and communication big data to intelligently judge the abnormal conditions of the elderly around the clock. It has covered 4.4 million elderly people and identified 300,000 risk warnings (Fujian Mobile Communications Co., Ltd., 2024).

The differences in the practical models of the three countries profoundly reflect their respective institutional environments, cultural traditions, and technological foundations. Japan's model, relying on its universal healthcare system and highly developed IoT infrastructure, emphasizes the systematic integration and tiered response of medical data, reflecting a "healthcare-led" approach. Europe's model highlights the comprehensive intelligent transformation of the home environment, emphasizing the construction of a passive security network through building and security

technologies, reflecting an "environment-led" approach. China's model exhibits a multi-faceted collaborative characteristic of government promotion, enterprise innovation, and community implementation, with different regions and enterprises exploring diverse paths for smart elderly care from different entry points, reflecting a "pilot-and-promotion" approach. It is worth noting that both Japan's voice interaction system and China's AI health manager attempt to solve the common problem of technical operational barriers for the elderly, but their implementation paths differ—Japan focuses on simplifying the user interface, while China focuses on proactive AI services; each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. The future development of smart elderly care should draw on international experiences while carrying out localized innovation that aligns with each country's resource endowments and the actual needs of its older population.

This study identifies five major future trends in digital home-based elder care (Table 2):

Table2. *Future development trends*

1	The in-depth application of intelligent hardware and robotics technology, including the popularization of nursing companion robots, the widespread application of wearable devices, and the transformation of aging-friendly smart homes. The improvement of the national strategic status of embodied intelligence will accelerate the breakthrough of humanoid robots in the elderly care scene (Lin, F., & Wang, H., 2025);
2	Digital intelligent platform and full-cycle service integration Combining to achieve a closed-loop service from health monitoring to emergency response;
3	Technological empowerment of emotional companionship and humanistic care, such as AI reproducing the voice images of family members for family interaction, and embedded smart devices in communities to promote social interaction among the elderly;
4	Coordinated development of cost reduction and increased urban and rural penetration rates, lowering user thresholds through policy subsidies and large-scale production (Zhu, Y., Jiao, G. X., &Wang, Y. C., 2024);
5	Policy support and industrial ecology construction, including China taking the lead in formulating international standards such as IEC 63310 "Performance Guidelines for Active Assisted Living Robots Used in Connected Home Environments", improving privacy protection regulations, encouraging cross-border collaboration between insurance, real estate, and technology companies, and adding smart health care majors in universities to cultivate interdisciplinary talents (Zhou, X. J., & Zheng, G. C.,2024).

Future trend analysis reveals two core logics in the evolution of digital home-based elderly care. First, technological integration—individual smart devices are gradually being replaced by systematic smart platforms, with hardware, software, services, and data forming a closed-loop ecosystem. This integration trend will greatly improve the synergy and responsiveness of elderly care services. Second, value-oriented humanization—the shift from early "technology-driven" to "demand-driven" approaches is gaining importance, with soft values such as emotional companionship and humanistic care receiving increasing attention. This reflects a profound transformation in smart elderly care from "instrumental rationality" to "value rationality." However, there is also potential tension between these two trends: technological integration means more data collection and more complex system operation, which may increase the difficulty for the elderly to understand and control; while value-oriented humanization requires technology to be "invisible" in the background, which in turn requires higher technological maturity and intelligence levels to achieve "seamless" services. How to achieve a dynamic balance between these two trends is the core issue for the future development of smart elderly care.

RESULTS

This study systematically explores the current application status, challenges, and countermeasures of digital technology in the field of home-based elderly care, and draws the following main results:

- 1. Population aging has become an irreversible global trend. Home-based elder care, with its advantages of familiarity with the environment, emotional continuity, and family support, has become an important elder care model for improving the quality of life for the elderly(Wang, L. J., & Zhang, J. G., 2023).
- 2. The promotion of digital technology in the field of home-based elderly care still faces multiple challenges, such as insufficient age-friendly technology, significant digital divide, privacy and security risks, service homogenization, high cost pressure and lack of humanistic care(Zhang, H. F., & Chen, J. Q.,2024). These challenges are not isolated, but rather interconnected and mutually reinforcing systemic dilemmas (Zhu, Y., Jiao, G. X., & Wang, Y. C., 2024), which require coordinated interventions from multiple dimensions, including technology, policy, society, and economy, to resolve(Zhou, X. J., & Zheng, G. C., 2024).
- 3. Addressing these challenges requires building a systematic solution that integrates technology, institutions, society, and humanities (Table3).

Table 3. Solution

1.At the institutional level:	Improve privacy protection laws and subsidy incentive mechanisms.
2.At the social level:	Build a community digital assistance and family-community linkage system.
3.At the technological level:	we should promote age-friendly modifications and demand-oriented product development (Zhang, H. F., & Chen, J. Q., 2024).
4.At the humanistic level:	we adhere to the service concept of technology as an aid rather than a substitute, and retain the warmth of human service (World Health Organization, 2023).

- 4. Successful cases from various countries show that there is no universally applicable model for digital technology to empower home-based elderly care. Instead, adaptive innovation should be carried out based on the institutional environment, cultural traditions and technological foundation of each country. China’s smart elderly care practices are characterized by government guidance, market operation, community implementation and technology-driven development, and have formed a number of typical experiences that can be replicated and promoted (Fujian Mobile Communications Co., Ltd., 2024).
- 5. The future of digital home-based elderly care will develop in depth towards intelligence, emotionalization and universal access, and its core logic should be "technology invisibility and service humanization". He future smart elderly care ecosystem should be an organic integration of "hardware + platform + service", a human-machine collaboration rather than human-machine replacement, and a technology that warms the aging society rather than cold digital monitoring (Zhou, X. J., & Zheng, G. C., 2024). Only by deeply integrating technological innovation with humanistic care can we achieve a historic leap from "survival-oriented elderly care" to "quality-oriented elderly care" (World Health Organization, 2023).

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XÜLASƏ

TEKNOLOJİ MÜDAXİLƏDƏN İSTİLİK QORUNMASINA: RƏQƏMSAL TEKNOLOGIYA EVDƏ QOCALARA QULLUQ MODELİNİN İNNOVASIYASINI VƏ HUMANİTAR DƏYƏRLƏRİN QAYIDIŞINI GÜCLƏNDİRİR

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Yaşlanan əhali kontekstində yaşlılara qulluq modelinin seçimi yaşlı yetkinlərin həyat keyfiyyətini və subyektiv rifahını birbaşa müəyyən edir. Beləliklə, bu məsələ fərdi ailələrdən kənara çıxan və cəmiyyətin bütövlükdə dayanıqlığını və inklüzivliyini əks etdirən əsas sosial problemə çevrilib. Ənənəvi evdə qulluq yaşlanan cəmiyyətin yaratdığı çətinliklərin öhdəsindən gəlmək üçün mübarizə aparır. Rəqəmsal texnologiyaların tətbiqi evdə qulluq üçün yeni həllər təklif edir. Bu, yalnız qayğı xidmətlərinin səmərəliliyini və keyfiyyətini artırmaqla yanaşı, həm də yaşlıların fərdiləşdirilmiş və müxtəlif ehtiyaclarını ödəyir. Bu məqalə evdə yaşlılara qulluqda rəqəmsal texnologiyaların müdaxiləsi təcrübəsindən başlayır, bu sahədəki çətinlikləri və mübarizə strategiyalarını araşdırır və rəqəmsal evdə yaşlılara qulluqun gələcək istiqamətlərini müzakirə edir. Məqsəd, texniki vasitələrin sadə tətbiqindən peşəkar səmərəliliyi və emosional temperaturu birləşdirən qəyyum modelinə qədər rəqəmsal evdə yaşlılara qulluqu təşviq etmək və evdə yaşlılara qulluq xidməti sisteminin optimallaşdırılması və yaşlıların rifahının yaxşılaşdırılması üçün istinad təmin etməkdir.

Açar sözlər: *ağıllı, ev əsəşi, qocalara qulluq, rəqəmsal texnologiya, sosial iş*

РЕЗЮМЕ

ОТ ТЕХНОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО ВМЕШАТЕЛЬСТВА К ТЕПЛОЙ ЗАЩИТЕ: ЦИФРОВЫЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ СПОСОБСТВУЮТ ИННОВАЦИЯМ В МОДЕЛИ УХОДА ЗА ПОЖИЛЫМИ ЛЮДЬМИ НА ДОМУ И ВОЗВРАЩЕНИЮ ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК

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В условиях стареющего населения выбор модели ухода за пожилыми людьми напрямую определяет качество жизни и субъективное благополучие пожилых людей в преклонном возрасте. Таким образом, эта проблема стала важной социальной проблемой, выходящей за рамки отдельных семей и отражающей устойчивость и инклюзивность общества в целом. Традиционный уход на дому с трудом справляется с вызовами, которые ставит перед нами стареющее общество. Внедрение цифровых технологий предлагает новые решения для ухода на дому. Это не только повышает эффективность и качество услуг по уходу, но и удовлетворяет индивидуальные и разнообразные потребности пожилых людей. В данной статье, исходя из практики внедрения цифровых технологий в уход за пожилыми людьми на дому, рассматриваются проблемы и стратегии их решения, а также обсуждаются будущие направления развития цифрового ухода на дому. Цель состоит в том, чтобы продвинуть цифровой уход на дому от простого применения технических средств к модели опекуна, сочетающей профессиональную эффективность и эмоциональную поддержку, и предоставить ориентир для оптимизации системы услуг по уходу на дому и улучшения благополучия пожилых людей.

Ключевые слова: *умный, надомный, уход за пожилыми людьми, цифровые технологии, социальная работа*