

**Post Course Assignment**  
**Reflection on Learning and Social Outcome**  
**UiS**  
**Susann, Guro & Camilla**

Throughout the week spent in Aalborg, we learned several things – for instance that Danish beer prices are more likable than Norwegian ones. We also learned a great deal about welfare technology and how it affects our society.

Firstly, complete access to the blogs should be given to at least one student from each participating University. This is to avoid stress and non-essential communication (time wasting), and allows everybody to be able to post their contributions with ease.

Though we were not introduced to many new types of technologies, we did learn more about how to use the technologies within health related work and welfare. Norway does in fact develop and research quite a few different welfare technologies, but the implementation of these are lacking – especially if one compares to what was shown in Denmark. The visit to the Nursing Home of the Future was eye-opening. Whilst the expenses of creating this building was abundant, it is clear that it is outweighed by the effect it has on the everyday life of the occupants. One can also see that possible benefits for the personnel are present; less physical work and a smarter overview of their patients needs and how to best assist them.

Usually, becoming old means becoming more dependent on others. This is not necessarily the case anymore. The new technologies enable people with disabilities, of either age or otherwise, to conduct their lives in a more independent manner. They are empowered to carry out tasks that they otherwise would need assistance to carry out. The process of rehabilitation could also be changed and become more effective through use of technology. Using games, virtual reality and specialized tech such as iTongue can be greatly beneficial tools in “life training” and rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the storage and security of personal information and data needs to be handled in such a manner that it is not accessible for outside parties. Firewalls and security measures are essential for the protection of the patients and their confidential information. This means that there is a whole new level of technological expertise needed, which includes but is not limited to being within programming, procedural planning, software development and privacy laws/regulations. A watchdog

gatekeeper of some sort should be present to make sure that all regulations are followed and that the systems are as secure as possible.

During the course with the different kind of welfare technology we learned that there were ethics to think about before we start to use this kind of technology. In group work and after the course we reflected around this topic. We also had a lecture about ethics in use of welfare technology. What we learned is that it's a lot of different aspects of the patient that we need to consider before we start to use welfare technology. We found that for example the remote care for COPD patient mostly focused on their physical health and less about their mental health. As we have experienced many COPD patients experience anxiety related to their breathing problems, we found that this type of care not would work so well for all the patients.

We also reflected about how less of human contact will impact on the patient's health. We found this to be good for some patients, but for other patients it may make them feel lonely. Many homecare patients are looking forward to the visits from the nurse, and it might be the only visit they have. The fact that there is a person that are paying you visits to make sure that you are alright, can for some make them feel safe. We also learned about the bed that turns the patients to prevent decubitus. If this bed is used, we don't need to disturb the patients' sleep. This may be a good welfare technology, but even in this case we need to consider what's best for our patients. Some might like to be left alone during the night, but others might want the nurse to check on him. We learned that each patient can be different, and that is why we need to hear their wishes and reflect on possible outcomes before we include welfare technology in their care.

The trip to Aalborg allowed us to make many new acquaintances. It was very nice to meet the other course participants and learn about their nursing education and how it is organized. We learned that the philosophical foundations in between the different countries are very similar. For example, Kari Martinsen's philosophy on nursing is highly appreciated in the different countries represented in the course. We also enjoyed being put in different groups among the other students, allowing us to obtain different knowledge and viewpoints.

As well as the social outcome of the intensive course in Aalborg, we also learned a lot about the city. A couple of us had never been to Aalborg prior to this trip, and therefore it was very nice to participate in the cultural activities such as the city walk and beer walk. Furthermore it was very interesting to visit the Future

Nursing Home. This was something we all looked forward to prior to the visit, and we were not disappointed. Compared to Norway, it seemed as if they allowed more aspects into the patient's everyday life - the Internet café, spa and barbeque, gardening and last but not least being able to go to the restaurant located on the first floor.

There is no doubt in our minds that we all benefit from working together in the development and implementation of welfare technology. All in all, we had a rewarding week with cultural, social and educational gains.

However, it is already evident that we are moving from a social to a more technologically based system of communicating in society and this is inevitably a questionable development of our society. At what cost are we willing to use technology to make everyday life easier? Are we willing to be more alone and lonely – are we willing to reduce human interaction to screens and robotized equipment? The question stands; are we de-humanizing society in our quest to improve healthcare? Though technology drives society forwards and allows us to reallocate resources to other areas in need, outcome studies are scarce at this date and need to be weighted to see the possible consequences of the technologies utilization. Of course, it is easy to see the positive consequences, especially on an individual level. But it is also critical that we take a step back and take a look at the issue as a whole. What will it do to us, as humans – who are social animals? What will it do to our society and our ability to function in society? How will it change our humanity, for the better or the worse?