

READY FOR A SOCIAL ROBOT? RESULTS OF A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY AMONG INFORMAL CAREGIVERS IN HUNGARY AND POLAND

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Care and support provided by family members in need due to a disease or age-related limitations is increasing in ageing societies. This non-professional (usually unpaid care) is referred as informal care in the literature. Social robots may provide an alternative for performing certain care activities and support informal caregivers in their demanding tasks. The aim of our research was to explore the suitability of informal care situations in Hungary (HU) and Poland (PL) for the introduction of social robots.

METHODS

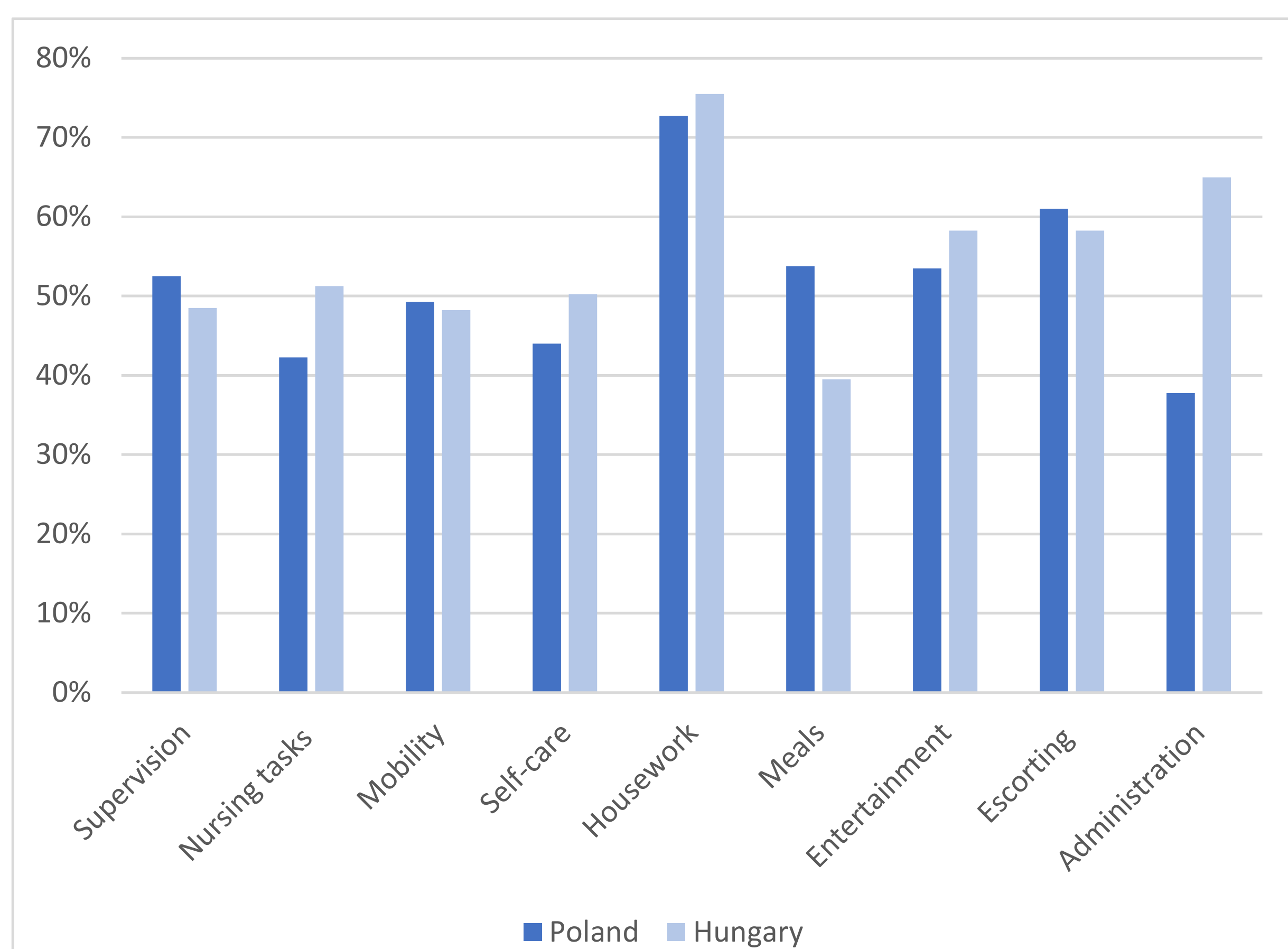
An online survey was conducted in April-May 2024 in Hungary and Poland among informal caregivers (N=400/country).

Sociodemographic characteristics of the caregivers were recorded. Participants were asked about their caregiving situation, own and the care recipients' digital activities, suitability of the care recipients' home to accommodate a social robot and their own previous experience with robots.

RESULTS

In Hungary and Poland, most caregivers were female (HU=70%; PL=52%) with mean age of 49 (SD=12) and 43 (SD=14) years, respectively. In both countries informal caregivers provided care for their parents (HU:37%; PL:38%). Help provided by the informal caregivers are presented in Fig.1.

FIGURE 1. INFORMAL CAREGIVERS' CAREGIVING TASKS



RESULTS (CONT.)

Caregiving situation

- Duration of care was >1 year in most cases (HU=50%; PL=57%).
- The majority of informal caregivers were living in the same household with the care recipient (HU=55%; PL=59%).

Care recipients' digital activity

- Altogether 47% (HU) and 41% (PL) of the care recipients browse the internet
- 40% (HU) and 30% (PL) use internet regularly for communication
- 66% (HU) and 70% (PL) use a mobile phone

Caregivers' digital activity

- Internet browsing: 76% in Hungary and 77% in Poland
- Communication using internet: 79% in Hungary and 73% in Poland

Suitability of care recipients' home for a robot

A large share of the caregivers indicated that the recipients' home was not suitable for a robot to access (HU: 31%; PL: 42%) or to move around indoors (HU=31%; PL=34%).

Internet connection was available in 79% (HU) and 80% (PL) of the care recipients' home, mobile net in 65% (HU) and 77% (PL).

Informal caregivers' experience with any robot

Only 27% (HU) and 31% (PL) of the caregivers have ever seen a robot (of any kind) before.

CONCLUSIONS

Our results suggests that, although with differences between countries, limited digital habits and the home design of care recipients might considerably hamper the use and acceptance of social robots in homecare.

These factors deserve consideration and need to be addressed in the development, market access and management of social robots.

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