Association (LIRA) in Spring 2020 to offer aging-related courses around healthy aging. However, due to COVID-19, these were canceled and are re-scheduled for Spring 2021 via Zoom. The paper will describe the process of selecting course offerings with LIRA and the subsequent cancellation/rescheduling process and adaptation needed. A course will focus on AFU initiative and the opportunities and challenges at UMass Lowell. Likewise, the other course will offer a session on technology and aging where age-based digital divide and strategies for reducing it will be discussed. This paper will reflect on how the collaboration with LIRA and course selection process relates to the AFU principles 1, 5 and 9.

Session 3505 (Symposium)

COVID-19: HOW IT SHAPED NURSING HOME CARE AND ELDER JUSTICE
Chair: Brian Lindberg
This session will provide updates on how the pandemic led to horrific situations in long-term care facilities and how the pandemic influenced major federal efforts to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

THE ELDER JUSTICE ACT AND THE PANDEMIC
Robert Blancato, Elder Justice Coalition, Washington, District of Columbia, United States
This session will provide updates on how the pandemic led to horrific situations in long-term care facilities and how the pandemic influenced major federal efforts to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

THE PANDEMIC AND NURSING HOME CARE
Lori Smetanka, The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, Washington, District of Columbia, United States
This session will provide updates on how the pandemic led to horrific situations in long-term care facilities and how the pandemic influenced major federal efforts to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

PANDEMIC LESSONS FROM A LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN
Mairead Painter, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Hartford, Connecticut, United States
This session will provide updates on how the pandemic led to horrific situations in long-term care facilities and how the pandemic influenced major federal efforts to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Session 3510 (Symposium)

DOING AGING RESEARCH TOGETHER: INNOVATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES
Chair: Anna Wanka Co-Chair: Anna Urbaniak
The symposium aims to take a closer look at what it means to involve older participants in ageing research - beyond the role of research subjects. By discussing projects that deploy different participatory approaches we investigate the manifold ways in which older adults can become co-creators of the research process. We do so comparing such approaches in different domains, with different outcomes and in different stages of the research process. Consequently, this symposium (1) looks at the research process through the lens of benefits and challenges resulting from involving older adults as co-creators; (2) showcases projects across different domains and different jurisdictions that applied participatory approach in ageing research to discuss benefits and challenges, and (3) advances scientific insights into participatory approaches involving older adults. After an introductory contribution outlining theories, concepts and developments of participatory approaches in ageing research, we present insights from three empirical studies in different cultural and thematic settings. In our first presentation, Anna Wanka and Anna Urbaniak open the symposium by presenting an overview of participatory approaches that involve older adults. In the first empirical presentation, Julia Nolte and Hamid Turker discuss the process of involving older adults in data analysis and therefore present data from the US. In the third presentation, Lillian Hunn highlights how the recent COVID-19 pandemic impacted patient involvement in research in Canada. Finally, Anna Urbaniak discusses the process of planning participatory research with hard to reach population among older adults in Austria, namely those who are socially excluded.

OLDER ADULTS AS CO-CREATORS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS: AN OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTS, METHODS, AND APPROACHES
Anna Wanka, Goethe University Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Hessen, Germany
Participatory approaches have a long-standing tradition in the social sciences and approaches have diversified across multiple research domains. Also in ageing, there is a growing interest in involving older adults, particularly in fields like gerontechnology development, environmental gerontology or patient involvement. In this contribution, ask what participatory approaches and co-creation means in the context of ageing research. What are the benefits and challenges of involving older adults in different research domains, stages of the research process and deploying various participatory methods and approaches? To approach this question, we present preliminary results of a comprehensive scoping review of the literature and provide examples of how older adults can be involved in developing research questions together with researchers, collecting and analysing the data, as well as validating and disseminating study results.

DESIGNING PARTICIPATORY AGING RESEARCH ON EXCLUSION FROM SOCIAL RELATIONS: A CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT
Anna Urbaniak, University of Vienna, Wien, Wien, Austria
Many policies and initiatives aim at enhancing the social participation of older adults. Despite this growing interest in increasing social inclusion and combating social exclusion in older age, the voices of socially-excluded older adults and their experiences remain underrepresented in research. Based on data from the Austrian research project “Socially Excluded Older Adults: Voices and Experiences” (SEVEN), I reflect on what it means to co-create research with the hard-to-reach populations of socially excluded older adults. Data discussed is derived By inviting this group to participate in each stage of the research, the project develops an innovative approach
that, on the one hand, facilitates and advances ways for socially-excluded older adults to express their voices, thereby empowering them and their self-advocacy, and, on the other hand, creates research insights that are able to grasp the life worlds of older, socially excluded adults more accurately.

INVOLVING OLDER ADULTS IN THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Hamid Turker, and Julia Nolte, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, United States

Because involvement of older adults in the research process continues to be low, we review existing approaches to engaging older adults in qualitative and quantitative data analysis. In doing so, we examine in which contexts older adults have or could serve as analysis consultants, collaborators, or even leaders. We also discuss the benefits and challenges associated with inviting older adults into the analysis process: On the one hand, this age group can contribute unique viewpoints and draw on a lifetime of experience and expertise. On the other hand, involving older adults in data analyses typically requires resources and time while bearing the risks of health-related attrition, tokenistic treatment, and power imbalances between researchers and older adults. As a result, we close with recommendations on how to navigate this process effectively and respectfully (e.g., building trust, reducing hierarchies, being mindful of older adults’ needs, and assessing their satisfaction throughout the collaboration).

RELATIONAL APPROACHES IN PATIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Lillian Hung, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragile state of patient involvement in research. The involvement of the most vulnerable population (older people with dementia) in research was even more challenging. This presentation outlines challenges my research team encountered in patient-led projects (older people with dementia) and describes how we found creative strategies to set up and complete research during the time of pandemic. I will describe how the team applied collaborative participatory principles to engage a team with diverse backgrounds in the lockdown time to maintain research progress. Patient partners in my research team actively led recruitment, research planning and decision-making, team analysis and knowledge exchange. University students in our research team helped to make technology easy to use for our patient partners. The friendly, flexible and accessible exchange between students and patient partners reinforced the importance of a respectful relational approach in patient-oriented research.

Session 3515 (Paper)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING (SRPP PAPER)

CHALLENGES TO ENGAGE LOW-SKILLED ADULTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Sydney Shadovitz,1 Abigail Helsinger,2 and Phyllis Cummins,1 1. Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, United States, 2. Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, United States

The demand for adult education and training (AET) opportunities throughout the life course is substantial as labor markets often require workers to obtain advanced skills. AET opportunities are more often pursued by high-income and high-skilled workers than low-skilled or low-income workers. With the increased prominence of job automation and technological advances in the workforce, low-skilled workers are at risk for fewer opportunities within the labor market. These factors emphasize the importance of providing learning opportunities throughout the life course. In this mixed-methods study, we analyzed 2012/2014 data from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) for the U.S., Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden to compare participation rates in non-formal education (NFE) by high and low-skilled adults. Countries were selected based on qualitative findings that inform best practices. Additionally, to gain insights of policies and programs that promote NFE, international key informant interviews (n = 33) were conducted. AET policies and programs, along with barriers such as cost, motivation, and time, were explored with key informants. Findings include (1) aging and skills are negatively correlated in all nations of interest; (2) low-skilled adults are less likely to participate in NFE than their high-skilled counterparts; (3) low-skilled workers in Norway and the Netherlands are more likely to participate in NFE than their U.S. counterparts; and (4) NFE is often more acceptable to low-skilled adults due to previous negative experiences with formal education. Using these findings, we discuss successful AET programs in Nordic countries for overcoming barriers.

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FINANCING ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Abigail Helsinger,1 Oksana Dikhtryar,1 Phyllis Cummins,2 and Nytasia Hicks,3, 1. Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, United States, 2. Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, United States, 3. Department of Veterans Affairs, San Antonio, Texas, United States

Adult education and training (AET) over the life-course is necessary to participate in economic, social, and political activities in the time of globalization and technological advancement. However, little research has been done to identify mechanisms to fund AET opportunities among middle-aged and older adults from a comparative international perspective. Our study aimed to identify strategies to finance AET opportunities for middle-aged and older adults through an international lens, to help identify barriers and facilitators in effort to best support adult learners regardless of education background or socioeconomic characteristics. We carried out a descriptive qualitative study to facilitate an in-depth understanding of funding mechanisms available to adult learners in the selected countries, from the perspective of adult education and policy experts. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with 61 international adult education experts from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and education institutions. Our informants represented 10 countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, the