Chapter 7
The Importance of Home Healthcare Technologies in Disabled and Elderly Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the increasing importance of home healthcare technologies in facilitating tourism participation among elderly and disabled populations. As the global aging demographic expands, the tourism sector must adapt to accommodate diverse accessibility needs. The chapter highlights how emerging technologies such as wearable healthcare devices, smart city infrastructure, and mobile navigation applications support greater autonomy and mobility for individuals with disabilities. Drawing on key statistical projections and academic literature, it addresses the concept of accessible tourism, the challenges disabled travelers face, and the role of inclusive technologies in overcoming physical and digital barriers. In doing so, this chapter emphasizes not only the social equity benefits but also the economic potential of integrating inclusive practices into tourism systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

The swift growth of the global aging population calls for incorporating older adults and those with disabilities into the social scene in a way that improves their quality of life. This change is evident not only in health services but also in areas

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that enhance life quality, like tourism. The World Health Organization predicts that in 2050, individuals aged 60 years and older will constitute 22% of the world population. This projection emphasizes the need for new policies and technologies in tourism that are accessible and inclusive of older and disabled individuals (Ivanova & Senkiv, 2019).

New technologies have emerged as significant resources to respond to these challenges. Smart city infrastructure, wearable healthcare technologies, mobile applications that are designed to meet the needs of disabled individuals, and digital navigation technologies support older and disabled individuals to become more active participants in tourism. So, technology should be used to enhance not only individual comfort but also equity in society, sustainability, and economic benefits. Studies indicate that older travelers and people with disabilities tend to have a higher average expenditures (Domínguez et al., 2013).

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

The conceptual underpinning of accessible tourism, smart healthcare technologies are found within the nexus of aging, disability, social inclusion, and technological advancement. Altınay et al. (2019), advocate that accessibility in health tourism is more than a desire for access by individuals, it is also a policy initiative that strives to foster societal wellbeing (Altınay et al., 2019). The academic foundations of this subject are built upon primarily normative theories such as "Universal Design" and "Inclusive Tourism." The universal design approach aims to ensure that all users, without any discrimination. Zajadacz (2015) points out that geographic barriers are one of the most significant but often overlooked limitations in planning processes that hinder the participation of disabled individuals in tourism activities. This issue can theoretically be explained through the concept of a "barrier-free environment" (Zajadacz, 2015).

2.1 Universal Design and Inclusive Tourism

Universal design is predicated on the notion that all environments; physical and digital products and services should be accessible by everyone. This approach seeks to provide equal social participation regardless of age, gender, or disability. Poli (2019) emphasizes is that universal design goes beyond physical accessibility, and must include access to information and services. According to Poli, these principles support and improve the quality of tourism destinations, expand the customer base and promote inclusiveness (Poli, 2019). Singh et al. (2021) state that the incorporation of IoT technologies into universal design provides solutions that are more