An innovative study in 2022 used the HBEC research registry to better understand how to design conversational and speech technologies for Black older adults. Prior research suggests current voice technology interactions are not equitable for non-White individuals. Voice technologies refers to computers recognizing human speech to perform tasks, such as a Google Home turning on smart lights, or searching information, such as the Apple device Siri providing the weather forecast. This project sought to uncover pain points that older adults experience when interacting with voice technologies, define values toward fair and equitable AI technologies, and envision future voice assistant product design.

The study was led by Drs. Robin Brewer (University of Michigan, School of Information), Christina Harrington (Carnegie Mellon University, School of Computer Science) and Courtney Heldreth (User Design Researcher at Google). Five HBEC Community Advisory Board members collaborated with the researchers to determine study design, location, and review the results. Sixteen HBEC members participated in the four in-person workshops at the Google Detroit office and completed follow-up telephone interviews. Participants answered questions about challenges, successes, and expectations regarding use of voice technologies.

Participants said that voice technologies do not sufficiently account for cultural or regional relevance of information (e.g., Belle Isle, Juneteenth), nor do they reflect their Black identity in the types of voices used. Participants
Get Physical!

Allison Moll
Clinical Psychology
Doctoral Student
Wayne State
University

Physical activity plays an essential role in healthy aging and fosters many areas of well-being. Being physically active can help prevent health problems that become more common with age. It can help manage diseases like diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease. It can strengthen your muscles, reduce the risk of illness, and help improve balance to prevent falls. Physical activity is also associated with better mental health and can reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Physical activity is good for your brain health as well. Many people may notice changes in their thinking skills, such as memory and attention, as they age. Staying active can help reduce declines in these abilities. Studies have shown that physical activity can reduce the risk of cognitive decline, especially in individuals at increased genetic risk of Alzheimer’s disease. At-risk adults who engaged in physical activity had a reduced risk of cognitive decline compared to at-risk individuals who did not engage in physical activity. Physical activity has also been shown to reduce shrinkage of brain regions critical to memory.

Any physical activity is better than no physical activity, but there are recommendations unique to specific age groups. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults 65 and older need to perform the following:

- At least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activities (like brisk walking) or 75 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity activities (like hiking, jogging, or running).
- Exercises that work to strengthen muscles at least two days per week.
- Exercises that develop balance at least three days each week, like balancing on one foot.

Individuals with chronic health conditions should understand how their health can impact their ability to safely engage in regular physical activity. Speak with your doctor if you have any concerns about your ability to be physically active. Once your physician gives the all clear, get moving!

Study from page 1

commented on the inclusivity of voice technologies as needing to know about their gender and cultural sayings. For example, voice technologies should know that “sugar” refers to diabetes and not a cooking ingredient.

These findings highlight current challenges that Black older adults experience when using voice technologies and indicate that these technologies could be useful tools for older adults as many use them daily. However, several participants experienced barriers to their anticipated search results. Much of what the researchers found speaks to the need for better automated speech recognition that understands the complex facets of someone’s identity like ethnicity or gender.

The study team is continuing to analyze and synthesize the data to publish a paper about their findings. They will present their findings at the March Lunch & Learn (see page 5 for details).
Identity theft is a horrible crime that can ruin your credit and finances. Identity theft occurs when a criminal uses your personal information, such as your Social Security number, to open credit accounts and/or obtain goods and services.

There are four main pieces of information an identity thief needs to assume your identity:

- Full Name
- Social Security Number
- Mother’s Maiden Name
- Date of Birth

Three of these are very easy to obtain, so please protect your Social Security number at all costs. Do not carry Social Security cards or share your Social Security number unless you have verified it’s legitimate and absolutely necessary.

Identity thieves have numerous ways to obtain an individual’s information. Some of the most common are phishing and dumpster diving. Phishing occurs when you get a phone call, email, or other form of direct communication asking you for personal information to verify your identity. Once you share this information it will be used to access existing accounts or open new credit accounts. Dumpster diving happens when you throw out mail or other documents with important personal information (like a Social Security number) on them without shredding or destroying them first.

Some warning signs you might be a victim of identity theft:

- Debt collectors begin to contact you about invalid debts
- You are denied services or utilities because you owe balances on unfamiliar accounts
- You find unfamiliar accounts on your credit report
- You are notified your information has been compromised in a data breach

If you notice any of these signs, you should immediately take action. First, you should order your free credit report from www.annualcreditreport.com for review and place a fraud alert on your credit file. Then, if you notice unfamiliar accounts on your credit report, you should contact all companies that you found to be holding fraudulent accounts, have the accounts closed or suspended and find out all of the information about the account (i.e. date opened, account balance, etc.) and the company’s process for addressing fraud. File a police report and complete an identity theft report with the FTC at IdentityTheft.gov.

Finally, be sure to complete all of the steps in the fraud resolution process to have the accounts closed and removed from your credit report.

Stop, Thief! Protect Yourself from Identity Theft

by LaToya Hall, SAFE Director

Need some assistance?
The SAFE program offers no cost, one-on-one support to those attempting to resolve identity theft. If you find yourself victimized, please contact LaToya Hall at 313-664-2608

SAFE CAN HELP YOU:

1. Report scams and identity theft to proper channels.
2. Pull and review credit reports.
3. Submit fraud complaints to close fraudulent accounts and remove negative items from credit reports breached by identity theft.
4. Negotiate payments or settlements with creditors.
6. Address consumer credit issues.
7. Understand financial communications from businesses, creditors, etc.
8. Add fraud alerts to the major credit bureaus.
9. Contact companies to sort out miscommunications or confusion about financial matters.
10. Draft financial plans and work toward financial goals.
“Education is the progressive discovery of our own ignorance.
Will Durant (1885 – 1981)

In our society, ignorance and stupidity are used synonymously. That is unfortunate because they are different. Ignorance is simply not knowing and can be cured with education. Unfortunately, as the 18th century German playwright Friedrich Schiller wrote, “against stupidity the gods themselves contend in vain.”

Embracing our own ignorance can be the first step to embracing learning as a lifelong endeavor. Lifelong because the skills and intellectual tools that serve in one phase of life may be unsuited to another and being willing to update our skills and knowledge can pay personal and financial dividends. Learning new things places us in a position to learn other new things. Understandably, we may feel that going back to school would be too difficult or simply impossible. How would we interact with people young enough to be our grandchildren or great-grandchildren? The chasm can seem so wide. However, if we can give younger people the chance, we may find them curious about us.

Many colleges and universities have specific programs for older learners returning to school, often at reduced cost or free. The world is changing rapidly. How society is organized and for what purposes continues to evolve. As an example, the proliferation of artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, robotics, and ever more sophisticated biotechnology, makes it imperative that citizens have a basic understanding of the concepts underpinning these technologies if we are to have a voice in their continuing deployment.
We have returned to our in-person format!
In-person events start at 11:00 am and end at 1:00 pm

FREE lunch • Space is limited
You must RVSP to attend at 313-664-2616
Leave a voice message with your:
  1. Name
  2. Phone number
  3. Lunch & Learn title
You will receive a confirmation call after registration

Wednesday, March 22, 11 am – 1 pm
Older Adults and Technology Use: The Google Study
Franklin Wright Settlements
3360 Charlevoix, Detroit, MI 48207
New technology is increasingly becoming part of our daily lives. Join us for a presentation from Dr. Robin Brewer and Dr. Christina Harrington on their study looking at how older adults interact with technology and how older adults want technology to interact with them.

Thursday, April 20, 11 am – 1 pm
Spiritual Self-Care
Fellowship Chapel
7707 Outer Dr W, Detroit, MI 48235
Join us for a talk with Rev. Dr. Samuel White, III. Dr. White is the author of Aging Gracefully: Spiritual Care for Aging Adults. His book provides the spiritual knowledge, practical information, and coping skills to help older adults address their needs as they age. He will provide his observations and recommendations for ways to engage in spiritual self-care.

Thursday, June 22, 11 am – 1 pm
The Benefits of Yoga for Older Adults
Palmer Park
910 Merrill Plaisance St, Detroit, MI 48203
Changes in memory, balance and energy can all come with aging. Yoga teaches us how to balance, breathe, stretch and work with our bodies as they change. A consistent yoga practice can offer low-impact cardiovascular exercise without putting too much strain on the heart or joints. Join Kerrie Trahan, the founder of Yoganic Flow, will show how yoga can improve your overall health -- followed by a yoga class.

Virtual Event:
Join us by phone or computer!

Thursday, May 18, 11 am-12:30 pm
The Impact of Ageism
When we encounter ageism in our daily lives, it can be frustrating and sometimes even harmful. Did you know it could even have an impact on your overall health? Join us for a conversation with Dr. Julie Ober Allen on the effects of ageism on your health and wellness.

TO JOIN BY TELEPHONE AT:
1-312-626-6799 and provide ID #: 954 9577 4535 when requested.

TO JOIN BY COMPUTER
type this link: https://bit.ly/hbelunch
into your internet browser.
If you would like a reminder before the event, please call us at 1-313-664-2616 and leave a voicemail with your:
• Name & Phone number
• Lunch & Learn title
• How you are attending (by phone or computer)
Research Studies Looking for Participants

The following list contains studies looking for participants. All have been reviewed and approved by the HBEC Community Advisory Board.

Supporting Caregivers of People with Dementia
Family caregivers are needed for a study that can be completed at home, online or in person at Wayne State University. Participants will be asked to participate in up to 3-4 focus groups or interviews. Each focus group or interview will last approximately 1-2 hours for a total time commitment of 4-8 hours. All participants will receive a gift card.
Contact Rosanne DiZazzo-Miller at ar7975@wayne.edu or 313-993-3970

SWELCare Study
We’re seeking volunteers who are Black or White living with and helping a family member or friend who has Alzheimer’s or a related dementia. Participants must be Michigan residents. Participation for the family member/friend includes a phone interview (1.5 to 2 hours), a training session by phone or Zoom (1.5 to 2 hours) and completing daily life assessments for 5 days. Participation for the person living with dementia includes completing a memory screener (10-12 minutes), a training session by phone or Zoom (20 minutes) and wearing one heart monitor on the chest for 5 days.
Contact the team at swelcarestudy@umich.edu or 734-936-7489.

Age and Alzheimer’s Disease Risk-Related Performance on Coordination, Magnitude, and Tempora Relational Framing Tasks
This project examines how people learn new relationships between concepts not previously taught. Participants are asked to complete a survey online and work with a researcher over Zoom to complete different cognitive tasks. Participants must be aged 65-89 and have access to a computer. The study is a one-time visit that lasts up to one hour.
Contact Jessica Katschke at gh9613@wayne.edu or 313-577-9260

The WALLET Study
People who experience a decline in memory or thinking skills may unknowingly also experience a decline in taking care of their finances. This study will review the past 12 months of your bank statements and administer some psychological and cognitive tests. Looking for English-speaking adults aged 60 or older. Study completed by telephone. Participants will be compensated.
Contact Vanessa Rorai at vrorai@wayne.edu or 313-664-2604.

Measuring Dementia Caregiving Styles
The goal of our study is to develop a questionnaire that can quickly understand how caregivers are approaching dementia related care and use this information to tailor supports and services to each caregiver’s unique needs. Looking for unpaid caregivers currently providing some form of physical assistance, emotional support, or financial assistance for a family member or friend who has a doctor’s diagnosis of an age-related dementia. Participation involves a 75-minute survey with the option to complete a 20-minute follow-up survey.
Contact sophia.tsuker@wayne.edu or call 313-355-3557.
The Heart of Detroit Study
This project aims to investigate the connections between daily social environments, life experiences, and cardiovascular health among African American adults living in the Detroit area. You might be eligible if you are between 55-75 years old and reside in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb counties.

To learn more, please call 313-577-3334.

The WISDOM Study
This study is working to improve breast cancer detection and prevention for all women. Participants have the option to learn their genetic risk of getting breast cancer, receive recommendations for when and how often to get screened, and learn strategies to reduce their breast cancer risk. Participation takes less than one hour a year and can be done almost entirely online. Looking for women aged 40 to 74 who have never had breast cancer.

Sign up or learn more at www.thewisdomstudy.org; email questions to info@wisdomstudy.org or call 855-729-2844.

Enhancing Digital CBT-I to Improve Adherence and Reduce Disparities
This project seeks to understand how different people interact with internet-based treatment for insomnia. We are looking to see how we can improve adherence to the program. This study lasts 8 weeks and requires participants to go through 20-minute weekly sessions of digital therapy for insomnia. Participants will have an initial call with the research team to set up their account for insomnia therapy. Participants may also be selected to have an exit interview.

Looking for those aged 18+ who have difficulty sleeping or insomnia.

Contact the team at dmeliky1@hfhs.org or call 248-344-7366.

Empower@Home
This project seeks volunteers to try an online interactive educational program. This new program, called Empower@Home, could lift your spirits and make you feel happier and more connected. Participants will try the program for up to 10 weeks, answer three surveys, and get paid up to $100 for participation. No prior computer experience is required. Tablet and internet will be provided for free as needed. No cost and no travel are needed for participation.

Contact the team at empower-at-home@umich.edu or 734-215-5654.

HBEC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

95-years-young Juanita Collins

By Adelia Cooley
HBEC CAB and Staff Member

“Aging is not bad, you just got to keep moving,” says Mrs. Collins, and she is a lady living by her own words. She is continuously exercising and moving around, inside and out of her home. This past summer, while out on the beach in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, she said, “What an enjoyable time I had walking in the water, and all that sand felt so good.”

Born in October 1927, in Mississippi, Mrs. Collins moved to Detroit after graduating from high school. She obtained employment with the United States Postal Service where she remained for 40 years until her retirement.

At 95, Mrs. Collins does everything for herself except cooking and only a limited amount of cleaning. Her daughter Beverly said, “My three siblings and I just check and make certain she is taking care of herself. My mother is the most caring, quiet, thoughtful, patient, kind, person I know.” What a beautiful compliment from a daughter about her young ageless mother!
In-person Lunch & Learns!

The Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC) is part of the Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University, Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research: A National Institute on Aging Grant.