

# Abstract for Welfare After Digitalization

**Complete title:** “The Role of Relatives in E-governance Access Among Elderly Citizens: Vignettes from the Danish Covid-19 Vaccination”

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## **Abstract:**

The Danish Covid-19 vaccination effort has been characterized by necessary e-governance use. This is to be expected given Denmark's reputation as a forerunner in e-governance, where digital communication is critical. The digitalized vaccination effort proved challenging for elderly citizens, with issues reported by interest groups such as DaneAge Association. To understand the challenges experienced by elderly citizens in this vaccination effort, we conducted a qualitative study comprising seven interviews - four experts from Danish regions and interest groups provide perspectives on the role of relatives in this vaccination effort. Three interviews with elderly citizens (the authors' relatives) provide vignettes of the role of relatives in the vaccination effort. We view this as a critical case (Flyvbjerg 2006), employing a conceptual framework of human-technology relations (Verbeek and Rosenberger 2015) between elderly citizens and the Danish government.

Through our analysis, relatives' role in facilitating Covid-19 vaccination of elderly citizens becomes apparent on three levels.

At the macro level, elderly citizens were prioritized for vaccination for Covid-19. At the meso-level, experts describe this being achieved by engaging with relatives of elderly citizens outside of traditional e-governance. At the micro-level, vignettes show the role of relatives in Covid-19 vaccination of elderly citizens situated in reciprocal offline contexts. We conclude that relatives embody the government by enabling and managing elderly citizens' e-governance access, thus becoming essential for pandemic management and public health. The Covid-19 vaccination as a critical case illuminates the challenges of e-governance access among elderly citizens.

Future research could investigate: I) the pandemic management process following development of e-governance services for Covid-19 vaccination, II) longitudinal research into the development of e-governance technologies and elderly citizens' interaction with e-governance, and III) embedding the complexities of relatives' role into e-governance technologies.

**Keywords:** elderly citizens, e-governance, pandemic management, human-technology relations