

MONITORING IN SOCIAL SERVICES FROM THE ELDERLY CLIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article examines the challenges posed by an aging population for social service providers. The limited number of social workers struggles to keep up with rapid population growth, potentially increasing care costs. Modern technologies, such as surveillance cameras (CCTV), are seen as essential for improving social service efficiency. As the elderly population grows and treatment options advance, collaboration between clients, staff, and technology is crucial. The study explores the use of CCTV in elderly care facilities and identifies legal concerns. It focuses on client experiences, highlighting privacy perceptions and concerns. Clients often worry about privacy breaches and misuse of CCTV, but many lack interest, likely due to limited awareness. Effective communication from social service providers is necessary. Legislation plays a critical role, protecting client rights. Consent for CCTV use should be freely given, with clients well-informed about risks. Compliance with these legal requirements varies in social care institutions. This article assesses client perceptions, information dissemination, and consent adequacy regarding CCTV in social services. Research spans Moravian-Silesian care facilities, involving 233 respondents—212 clients and 21 staff members.

Key words: Aging Population; Social Service Providers; Surveillance Cameras; Client Perceptions; Legislative Compliance.

JEL Code: K10, H55

1 Introduction

Social service providers encounter numerous challenges associated with an aging population. The growth in the number of social workers cannot keep pace with the expanding population, as it would lead to an unsustainable increase in care costs. Consequently, it becomes imperative to harness technologies, such as surveillance cameras, which can partially substitute the physical presence of social workers while ensuring the delivery of quality care (Emilsson et al., 2023). With the elderly population on the rise and the advent of novel treatment options, including the integration of modern technology for patient monitoring, the synergy between

clients, staff, and digital technology becomes indispensable (Strisland et al., 2013). Thus, the significance of employing modern technology in the provision of social services is on the ascent. Digital technologies hold the potential to save time and enhance the efficiency of delivering social services. Nonetheless, the convergence of these two realms necessitates robust legislative support, particularly in safeguarding the well-being of social service clients (Hyer, 1994). Nevertheless, the reception of these innovations by clients often remains underexplored. Consequently, this article delves into the utilization of a specific form of modern digital technology, namely CCTV, in care homes, and identifies potential legal concerns. It also investigates clients' experiences with CCTV systems. The primary objective of this article is to establish connections between legal aspects, particularly those pertaining to consent for capturing a person's likeness, and the impact of these technologies on the clients themselves. The paper aims to address questions regarding how clients perceive the presence of CCTV in social services and access information concerning CCTV usage (RQ1) while identifying potential threats of legal infringements (RQ2).

2 Legal Background and Literature Review

The safeguarding of human privacy is a fundamental human right enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Czech Republic. Additionally, privacy protection is addressed within the framework of the Czech Civil Code as an integral component of an individual's personality rights. Article 81(2) of the Czech Civil Code delineates this protection, specifically encompassing a person's life, dignity, health, the entitlement to reside in a conducive environment, dignity, honour, privacy, and expressions of their personal nature. Moreover, the Civil Code contains distinct provisions pertaining to the safeguarding of likeness and privacy, outlined in Sections 84 to 90.

Numerous studies have delved into the integration of new technologies within the realm of social services (Mujirishvili et al., 2023). These studies encompass various social care settings (Zakaria et al., 2017) and endeavor to establish algorithms for digitizing aspects of social care (Elisabeth Moy, 2006). Additionally, research has addressed the monitoring of patients transitioning from hospitals to nursing homes and has examined their satisfaction levels, often gauged through client questionnaires (Soliman, 1997). Within this context, researchers are particularly concerned with the potential erosion of clients' trust due to the use of technology, including unwarranted invasions of privacy. It is recognized that technology, while an enabler, can also pose significant threats (Reamer, 2003). Thus, dilemmas associated

with the implementation of technology in social services extend beyond its general benefits (Nordesjö et al., 2022). Consequently, various professional standards impose rigorous ethical demands on social workers to ensure privacy and foster trust, ultimately aiming for an improved quality of life (Husebo, 2020). These ethical considerations encompass not only intentional misconduct by social workers leading to the misuse of records but also the proper security of information systems. Moreover, studies have explored the economic aspects of technology adoption, particularly the potential reduction in the cost of follow-up care (Agboola et al., 2017; Feldman). It is evident, however, that only a sophisticated information technology infrastructure can facilitate more efficient administrative operations and enhanced client care (Alexander, 2009). Modern technology also plays a pivotal role in alerting staff to compliance with long-term care standards (Yap, 2019; Sklar et al., 2020).

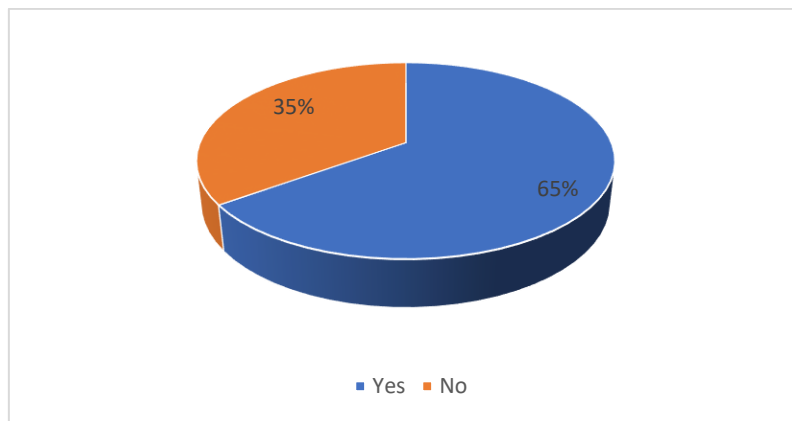
3 Research Design

There are few studies that focus on client satisfaction with monitoring. Existing measures of satisfaction lack sufficient theoretical underpinning (Willis et al., 2016). This contribution aims to partially bridge this gap. This article focuses on how clients perceive the presence of a camera system in social services, investigates how clients are informed, and whether their consent is adequate. It also examines how clients access information about the use of the camera system and whether they are interested in being informed about this issue. All of this is subsequently compared with current and effective legislation. A total of 10 social facilities in the Moravian-Silesian Region of the Czech Republic (Moravskoslezský kraj) were selected. The study involved 233 respondents, including 212 clients and 21 employees of these facilities. Questionnaires were distributed among facilities with camera systems (91 clients) and facilities without them (121 clients), as well as among the management of social facilities. The survey was conducted among senior home residents according to § 34 paragraph 1 letter e) of Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, aged between 65 and 80 years. In the Moravian-Silesian Region, there are a total of 73 such senior homes. The research is focused on evaluating the perception of camera systems in social services among clients. Although the study is concentrated on the Moravian-Silesian Region, the results can contribute to a broader understanding of how camera systems are perceived in social services in other areas as well.

4 Results

A total of 91 clients expressed their views in facilities with cameras. From Figure 1, it is evident that 65% of clients noticed camera systems directly in their rooms or in common areas, while approximately one-third of clients did not notice the existence of such devices at all. Here, there is a potential risk of non-compliance with the law, as both the Civil Code and GDPR generally require consent for capturing one's likeness unless it falls under an exception in accordance with § 88 or § 89 of the Civil Code, or Article 6(1)(d) of the GDPR. Consent for capturing a person's likeness is perceived as a necessary condition for upholding an individual's personality rights and preventing the capture of a person's likeness without their consent. However, Figure 2 shows that only about 15% of respondents are bothered by the use of cameras in their rooms, with the majority either respecting their use to some extent or simply being unaware of them.

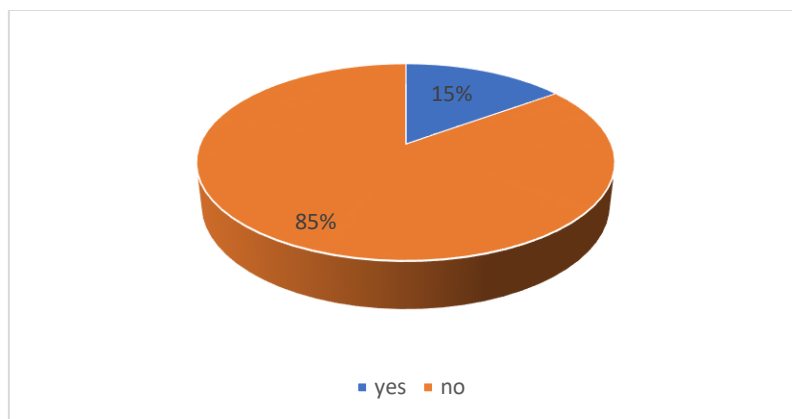
Fig. 1: Did you notice any cameras in your room or common areas?



N=91

Source: Author's own data

Fig. 2: Do you mind that cameras are used in your room or common areas?

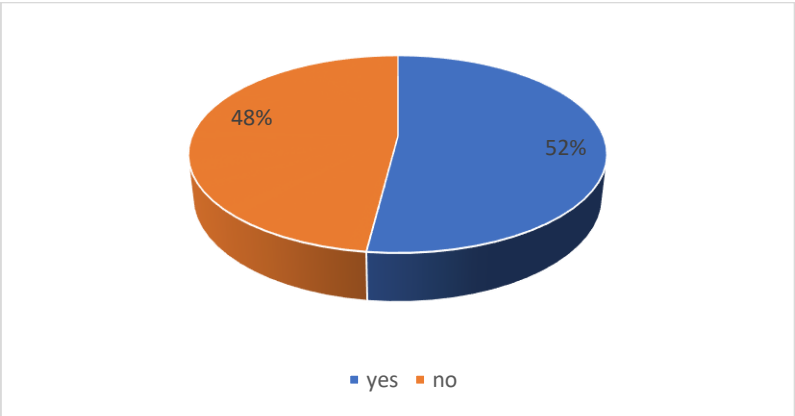


N=91

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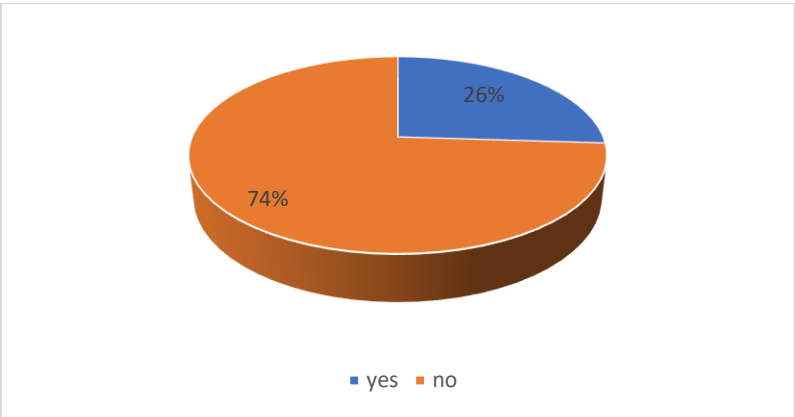
From Figure 3, it can be seen that practically every other client does not perceive the camera system as a tool that protects their own security in terms of, for example, limiting their personal freedom, nor do they perceive that camera systems contribute to proving certain facts related to the loss of belongings (Figure 4).

Fig. 3: Do you think that cameras help ensure your safety and protection?



N=91
Source: Author's own data

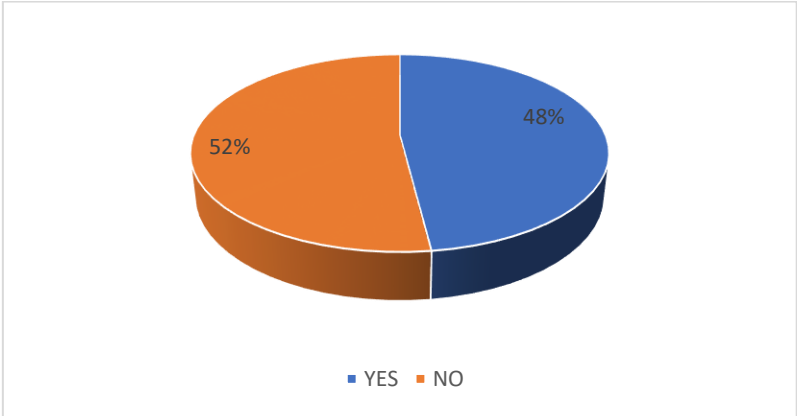
Fig. 4: Have cameras helped clarify certain situations for you? (such as the loss of personal belongings, etc.)?



N=91
Source: Author's own data

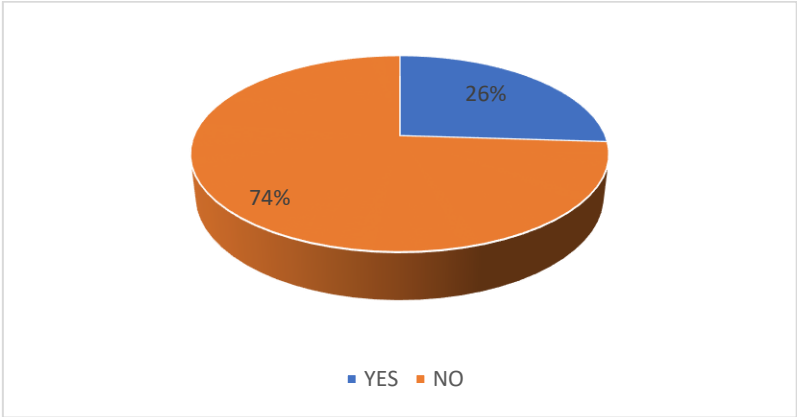
Clients of the social facility should be provided with information about the use of cameras. In the case we examined, it was revealed that this is not the case, as approximately half of the clients have no idea why camera systems are used (Figure 5). Despite the emphasis placed by the legislator on informing clients about usage, Figure 6 shows that just under 74% have no interest in the reasons for using the cameras.

Fig. 5: Do you know why cameras are used?



N=91
Source: Author's own data

Fig. 6: Do you want to be informed about the reason for using the camera, including recording?

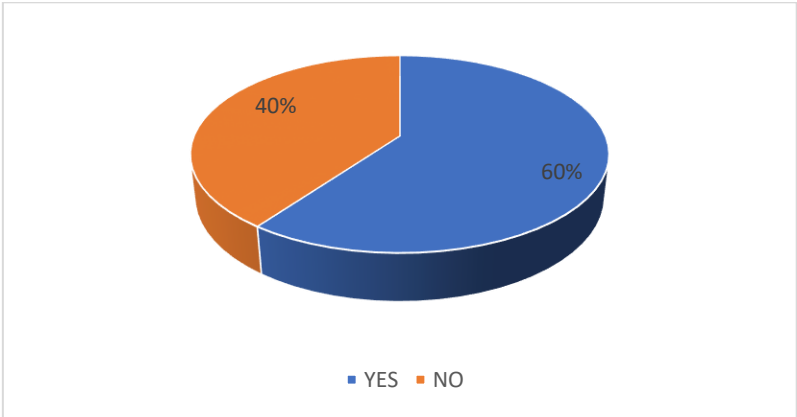


N=91
Source: Author's own data

Facilities without cameras

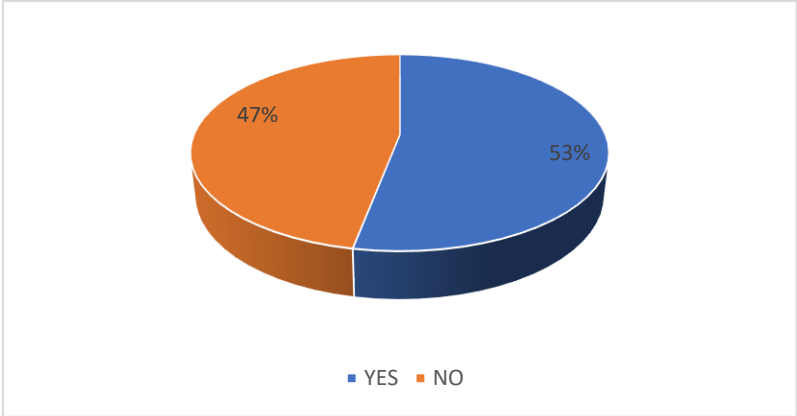
Figure 7 indicates that clients in facilities where a camera system is not used mostly (60%) believe that using cameras would be an intrusion into their privacy. On the other hand, when it comes to ensuring security, 53% of respondents expressed a positive opinion (Figure 8).

Fig. 7: Do you think that using cameras would be an intrusion into your privacy?



N=121
Source: Author's own data

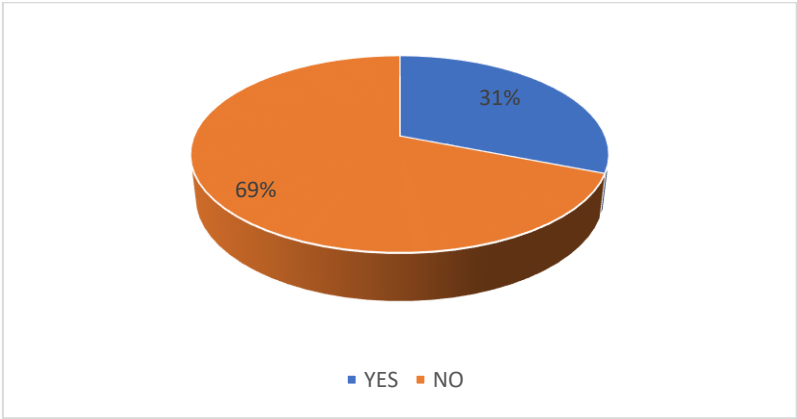
Fig. 8: Do you think that cameras help ensure your safety and protection?



N=121
Source: Author's own data

Similarly to clients in facilities where a camera system is used, they also respond that they are not interested (approximately 69%) in being informed about its usage or the usage of recordings (Figure 9).

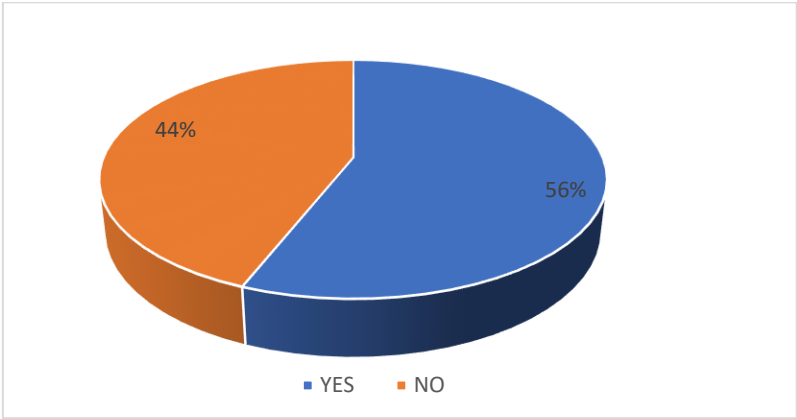
Fig. 9: If a camera system were to be used in your facility, would you want to be informed about why it is used and how it operates?



N=121
Source: Author’s own data

Figure 10 indicates that 56% of respondents would agree to the use of cameras for monitoring, even though they generally perceive cameras as an intrusion into privacy.

Fig. 10: Would you be willing to sign consent for cameras to be used for monitoring you or your loved ones during your stay in a senior home?



N=121
Source: Author’s own data

5 Discussion

The results indicate that in the examined facilities with cameras, the majority of clients, specifically 65%, noticed camera systems directly in their rooms or in common areas of the facility. However, it is interesting to note that approximately one-third of clients (35%) did not notice the existence of such camera systems at all. This situation may pose a legal risk, especially concerning the Civil Code and GDPR. These legal regulations generally require an individual's consent for the use of camera systems capturing their likeness. It is possible that clients were informed about the use of camera systems, but due to their condition, they may not reflect on their existence. If they are not aware of their presence, they become more vulnerable, and more responsibility is placed on the operators of these facilities to prevent misuse of camera usage. There are situations, as mentioned earlier, where the client's consent is not necessary, for example, in cases of endangering their life or protecting other legitimate interests. However, these exceptions can only be applied to specific situations under specific conditions and must be properly justified, not as a general rule, as detailed in § 88 or § 89 of the Civil Code or Article 6(1)(d) of the GDPR. Consent for the use of camera systems is seen as a necessary condition for protecting individual personality rights and preventing unauthorized image capture. Nevertheless, Figure 2 shows that only about 15% of respondents have some reservations or feel uncomfortable about the use of cameras in their rooms and common areas. Nearly half of the clients do not perceive the camera system in the examined facilities as a tool primarily for their own security. They do not consider camera systems useful, even for clarifying specific situations, such as proving specific facts related to the loss of belongings (Figures 3 and 4). Social facilities should educate clients about the importance of cameras for their own safety or the safety of their property, as well as for preventing criminal activities, including programs aimed at early detection. This argument should also be emphasized. Social facilities should highlight these benefits and alleviate concerns about the loss of privacy, which clients primarily associate with the fear of being watched, thus interfering with their privacy. In two cases, clients mentioned that the camera system causes them anxiety. Social facilities should also explain why they do not use other monitoring tools, such as bracelets. It seems that communication between the social facility and the client on this topic is inadequate. The results show that clients of social facilities are not sufficiently provided with information about the use of camera systems and their significance. Half of the clients have no awareness of why camera systems are used in the facilities, nor do they have any interest in it. This situation is problematic because clients' awareness of the use of camera systems is crucial for respecting privacy, ethics, and

individual rights. Clients should be properly informed about the purpose and intent of camera usage so that they can make decisions about their privacy and security in line with their needs and preferences, despite their lack of interest. In facilities where a camera system is not used, the majority of clients (60%) believe that using cameras would be an intrusion into their privacy. This result shows that clients perceive potential camera usage as a threat to their privacy and a possible violation of personal rights. Conversely, Figure 8 reveals that 53% of respondents have a positive attitude toward its usage, with the justification of increasing their protection. In Figure 9, it can be seen that the majority of clients (69%) in facilities with the use of a camera system have no interest in being informed about why the camera system is used or how it works, or the usage of recordings. This demonstrates that, at least for the majority of these clients, being informed about the use of a camera system is uninteresting. This lack of interest arises from the fact that clients cannot imagine the consequences of unauthorized camera system usage, making it uninteresting for them.

6 Conclusion

The perception of the presence of a camera system or the possibility of such a system being installed is not straightforward. Senior home clients express concerns about the loss of their privacy, including the potential misuse of the camera system (RQ1). However, the overall research findings indicate that senior home clients are not very interested in cameras and do not have an adequate amount of information about them. In fact, most clients do not show any interest in cameras. Several reasons may contribute to this. Firstly, as the research revealed, a significant portion of clients is not even aware of the existence of cameras. They may focus solely on their own interests, and cameras are not a priority for them, or they may trust the facility greatly and do not expect anything untoward. Furthermore, inadequate information is a contributing factor, which may result from both the clients' inability to assess the consequences of the existence of camera systems and the reluctance of social facility staff to provide them with information. If clients are not adequately informed, they cannot be aware of the associated risks or their rights, granted both by the Civil Code and the GDPR. Consent for capturing one's likeness, or its dissemination, must be fundamentally based on informed consent. Therefore, clients must have sufficient information. The legislation is set up correctly. Social facilities must actively communicate with clients on this matter. It is not enough to have a formal consent in the form of a signature on a form that the client receives upon entering the facility. Moreover, conclusions applicable to informed consent in healthcare apply similarly here (RQ2). Whether

in facilities using camera systems or those that do not, the attitude toward camera usage is similar and does not differ significantly. This passive attitude may stem, as mentioned earlier, from a lack of information, which is necessary to rectify to adhere to proper ethical and legal practice.

7 Research Limitations

One limitation of the research may be the sample size, as only specific facilities were selected. On the other hand, the sample of respondents includes more than 200 clients, which is not a small number, and its representativeness was not affected. The respondents' sample was chosen entirely randomly. Response bias was minimized by administering the questionnaire through face-to-face interviews with the clients.

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