



# Digital Support: New Social Support Changes in Aging in Place of Beijing

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**Abstract.** China is currently facing two irreversible trends: the deepening of population aging and the rise of the digital society. Metropolises are not only rich in material and social resources, but also accompanied by the gradual evolution of family structures towards smaller and empty-nest households. Against the backdrop of aging and digitization, these characteristics have also led to a series of new problems. Due to the increasing lack of support at the family level, the elderly population in metropolis has to rely more on social support mechanisms. This study based on in-depth interviews with 52 aged or their children engaged in elderly home-care in Beijing, discovers a new trend in social support among the elderly in Beijing—digital support. Digital support has brought a turning point to this dilemma, allowing for the effective integration of family support and social support for the aging in place, thereby jointly supporting elderly living.

**Keywords:** Metropolis, Aging in Place, Social Support, Digital Support.

## 1 Introduction

Population development is a crucial structural force influencing the development of human society. Currently, population aging is a global trend. With the improvements in medical and living standards, the average lifespan of the global population continues to increase, leading to a rising proportion of elders in different countries. Over the coming decades, significant population aging phenomena will be successively encountered by major countries and regions worldwide. According to the "2022 National Development Report on Aging", as of the end of 2022, China had 280.04 million people aged 60 and above, accounting for 19.8% of the total population, and 209.78 million people aged 65 and above, accounting for 14.9% of the total population[1]. In Beijing, the population aged 60 and above was 4.651 million, accounting for 21.3% of the total registered population, while the registered elderly population aged 65 and above was 3.018 million, accounting for 21.1% of the total registered population[2]. This indicates that China is entering a new stage of comprehensive response to aging. China, being in the aging era, is also a major cyber country. According to the 52nd "Statistical Report on Internet Development in China", as of June 2023, the scale of urban Internet citizens in China had reached 777 million, accounting for 72.1% of the

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overall Internet users; 54.6% of cyber users aged 60 and above possess at least one basic digital skill (the ability to use digital tools to access, download, or transmit digital resources)[3]. At the same time, the elderly aged 60 and above constitute the main group of non-Internet users in China. Non-Internet users are unable to access the internet, resulting in inconvenience in daily activities such as travel, consumption, medical treatment, and administrative matters, and they are unable to fully enjoy the convenience brought by intelligent services.

Population aging in China is not only an inevitable trend in economic and social development but also an unavoidable result of demographic structural transformation[4]. As the capital of China, Beijing bears more distinguished pressures from the population structure. Compared with other countries in the world, China's aging process features rapid speed, short duration, and a large population size. Meanwhile, China is also undergoing an unprecedented process of digital modernization and urban integration, manifested not only in the traditional sense of ideological and lifestyle modernization but also in the revolution of residents' lifestyle led by digital technology.

This paper conducted in-depth interviews with 35 elderly individuals (with an average age of over 75 years) living in Beijing, exploring their actual elderly care needs and current situations, and further discussing how do elderly in metropolis integrate into the digital society, and how will digitization impact their home-based caring lives? This study aims to explore digital support for elders living at home in large cities from the perspective of social support, thereby expanding the research boundaries of social support and providing references for Chinese government to formulate future policies of aging.

## **2 Demands and Current Situation of the Elderly Receiving Home Care in Metropolis**

Family is paramount for everyone, particularly in traditional Chinese society where it is closely intertwined with the regime. For aging people, the emotional significance of family differs from that of younger individuals. Their end of life time are closely connected with their families, which serve as the core support for their continued life and provide them with the entirety of their life's meaning. Family members are the ultimate provider of their survival resources. However, with the evolution of modern Chinese family structure and societal progress, urban elders' home-based cares are undergoing significant changes.

### **2.1 Changes in Urban Family Structure**

Many modernized factors proposed by modernization theory are being reproduced and continued in Chinese urban and rural societies. For instance, there is rapid shift of immigration from rural to urban areas, particularly towards to central cities; technological advancements leading to increased spatial distance within families; the devel-

opment of individualistic values with a focus on secular happiness and pleasure, and so forth[5].

China possesses profound cultural and moral traditions, and Chinese families uphold their own unique values and lifestyles. Despite the overall social development in China following the path of Western industrialization and urbanization, the transformation of Chinese families still exhibits its distinctive trajectory and modern family patterns. According to my interview findings, with the economic development, families in the urban areas of Beijing are gradually becoming tiny in size, with an increasing proportion of nuclear families. Individualism and the independence of core families are consequently growing. Even among the members identified as a part of the subjective family by the interviewees, they are primarily concentrated within their own family rather than extended family. Interactions with siblings are relatively infrequent in ordinary circumstances, and relatives are seldom sought for help in cases of serious illness or financial need. The transformation of urban Chinese families is propelled by multiple factors. Goode has repeatedly emphasized the significant role of values and ideological dissemination in the process of family transformation[6]. Beijing, as the capital of China, has historically been one of the most active cities in China for combined with western economic factors and culture. Western culture includes concepts such as conjugal family ideals and gender egalitarianism, which Goode believes play an important role in the transformation of non-Western societies' families. With the dissemination and acceptance of these concepts, Beijing is exhibiting more characteristics of modern society and modern families.

In modernized societies, due to the "detraditionalization" trend and declining birth rates, family structures are increasingly becoming more nuclear and smaller in size. It is common for married children to live separately from their parents, even among unmarried children who have achieved a certain economic status. In urban areas, parents and children often maintain separate economic independence, with only the elderly generation requiring care from their offspring during relatively short periods of time when they lose the ability to care for themselves. This relaxation of intergenerational relationships is characterized by a weakening feedback component in the caregiving-support relationship and an increase in intergenerational exchange relationships[7]. Meanwhile, there is a growing phenomenon in urban areas where adult children, who are already "grown-up," continue to rely on their elderly parents for housing, livelihood, and further education, thereby expanding their dependency status within the core family. They are unable to establish their own nuclear families through marriage and childbearing. Even if their children get married, they often rely on their elderly parents for housing, childcare for their grandchildren, and daily living expenses. This trend is becoming increasingly apparent in large cities, thereby reversing the traditional direction of intergenerational caregiving within nuclear families and becoming a rapidly growing phenomenon of reverse backbone families.

With the development of modern families characterized by declining fertility rates and nuclearization, the aging population in urban families is receiving shrinking care and support from their children. The social mainstream is hollowing and downsizing families, and even the younger generation who do not raising grandchildren feel a dwindling sense of responsibility towards caring for their parents. Compared to care-

giving for parents, the younger generation has a stronger sense of self-awareness and pursuit of self-value.

## **2.2 Changes in the Ideology of Aging People in Metropolis**

### **The Traditional Filial Piety and the Desire for Home-based Care**

The majority of elderly individuals interviewed in this study strongly prefer home-based care, with some even emotionally rejecting the proposal of nursing home when talk about it. The resistance of the aging people towards nursing home is fundamentally reflection of China's culture of filial piety. Filial piety is an important component of traditional Chinese culture, serving as the core of family ethics for a long time, and exerting significant influences on how to care for the aging people and specific caring behaviors. Whether one can receive home care and whether children are willing to take care of their parents are often important indicators for the elderly in evaluating their children's filial piety. Sending elderly parents to nursing homes is perceived by many as an act of abandonment.

Filial piety is an ethical concept deeply rooted in Chinese civilization, intricately linked with the ancient Chinese modes of production, lifestyles, and social cultural structures, collectively constructing the unique moral system of the Chinese regime. However, as we gazing the profound changes in modern and contemporary China, there is a thought-provoking phenomenon: despite the societal environment experiencing the dissolution of the feudal system, the baptism of the New Culture Movement, the trials of Anti-Japanese War, the founding of the People's Republic of China, the socialist transformation, and the advent of the new era of reform and opening-up, numerous folk beliefs and behavioral patterns have undergone profound changes. However, the traditional notion of elderly care by children stubbornly persists in the minds of many seniors. This mindset is so entrenched that even when living in extremely adverse conditions and experiencing a severe decline in living standards, the elderly continue to resist socialized care support models. The cultural logic and psychological mechanisms underlying this phenomenon undoubtedly constitute a topic worthy of in-depth exploration.

### **Awakening of Individualism**

Individualization refers to the process in which, under the conditions of contemporary economic activities, social production, labor-employment environment and rapidly changing of society, individuals, as basic units in the social relationship system and as entities in social action processes, increasingly demonstrate and express their independence, uniqueness, and subjectivity. Individualization describes a transformation in social structure, where traditional concepts such as family, religion, class, and ethnicity have difficulty clearly supporting individual identities. According to the German sociologist Beck, the welfare state exists for individuals rather than collectives, thus promoting the process of individualization. The trend of individualization in Europe, characterized by "living for oneself and dying for oneself," has its economic and political social basis. The development of society grants individuals more free-

dom, but they bear more social risks and responsibilities. Therefore, they live for themselves.

Fei Xiaotong, the founding sociologist of China, proposed the concept of "differential sequence" over half a century ago to describe the different structural principles in traditional Chinese society. He described that the most important kinship relationship in Chinese society is like the nature of concentric circles formed by throwing stones. In such a network of concentric circles, each person is the center of the circle pushed out by their social influences. Contacts occur when the ripples of the circle reach someone. Through this concept, Fei argued that Chinese society is not group-oriented but self-oriented, which is very different from the western researchers focused on Chinese studies. The most prominent aspect of the "differential sequence" is that individuals at the center endow different values to each circle of relationships (or the people within these relationships); correspondingly, the norms of social interaction and moral judgments vary greatly when applied to different individuals within these circles. An 87-year-old interviewee lives with her spouse in their home near the East Third Ring Road. Her spouse has mobility issues, so she takes care of him herself and refuses to hire caregivers or housekeepers, and she also prefers not to live with her family members.

*GYW: My husband and I do not live together with our children. We have two sons and two grandsons, all of whom have jobs and live separately. The lifestyles of two generations are different, so we cannot live together. The best thing is we can take care of ourselves. I don't want to live in a nursing home, nor do I want to live with the younger generation. We are used to living together as a couple, and it doesn't feel right to live with others or go elsewhere. As long as I can be with my husband, just the two of us are enough. But I know we cannot always stay together. If one of us passes away, the other will still stay at home, firmly refusing to go to a nursing home or hire a live-in caregiver.*

The interviewee and her husband are both native Beijingers. After their retirement, they have received a combined monthly pension of over 10000 yuan, which is considered a high retirement pension for the elderly in Beijing. The interviewee's sons are doctor and business manager, both have the ability to provide some financial support to their parents. However, during the interview, the interviewee mentioned repeatedly the differences in lifestyle between the two generations and expressed reluctance to live with their children. Through my research, it was observed that some aging adults are unwilling to live with their children and also unwilling to receive the support provided by nursing homes. This resistance is not due to emotional opposition to their children, but rather stems from a desire to cherish and pursue their own freedom. This living philosophy is closely related to the urban lifestyle and high economic status prevalent in larger cities.

Most of the aging people in urban areas have stable pensions and retirement funds. Without luxurious spending, they can be self-sufficient and some can even use part of their savings to support their children and other family members. "Money is one's backbone," the core of elderly people's reluctance to live with others is the pursuit of independence and liberty. They do not want to be supervised and interfered with by their children, nor do they want to be subject to their children's emotions and de-

mands. Instead, they prefer to arrange their daily lives according to their own interests and schedules, enjoying a comfortable and leisurely living. Definitely, the pursuit is due to the foundation that urban seniors have sufficient financial savings and do not require additional economic support. It indicates that while they pursue independent living, they also rely heavily on individual financial independence to achieve a freer and enjoyable late-life.

### **Quest for Self-worth**

Many urban elderly adults hope that they live in a valuable, useful, trouble-free, respectable, and affluent later years. Most aging individuals design their daily lives based on relatively positive images, particularly males, who often have higher demands and plans for their late-life living. The term "young heart" is used in daily language to describe this psychological state, partly accurate. Indeed, in large cities, aging people have better medical and social resources, it allowed many people have the opportunity to choosing diverse lifestyles even after being old. They do not necessarily perceive themselves as elderly and may even continue earn money for their families. However, this is not merely a resistance to aging or refusal to accept it. Essentially, it is a pursuit of self-worth, where a positive outlook on life is not necessarily related to age. Fundamentally, it reflects the influence of individualism and independence values in personal lives and behaviors.

Elder man who prioritize self-worth may often reject on social support, which means relative vulnerability. Behaviors emphasizing individual worth is typically closely associated with self-realization and individualism. Individualists tend to pursue self-realization and individual responsibility rather than seeking external assistances. Moreover, some highly self-esteem elders may equal accepting support or assistance to contempt for themselves, which leading them to endure struggles rather than actively accepting supports. Additionally, concepts such as independence and freedom are more welcomed in urban areas, where the aging people have already subtly formed by individualistic value systems for many years. It provoked that eldly adults are more inclined to independent aging or autonomous home-based care, viewing external support as an unnecessary.

Hence, elders who pursue their self-worth rejecting social support is influenced both by the ideological values prevalent in large city and by individual psychology and perceptions of their social roles. When older adults are unsure about whether they need social support or what kind of support they require, their personal aspirations for self-struggle and self-realization may preemptively dismiss the possibility of seeking social support.

### **Aging Floaters: Multidimensional Vulnerable Groups in Large Cities**

The remote parents who lodging with their children in Beijing is increasingly growing in proportion, and the "aging floaters" faced more awkward situations compared to local seniors in big cities. Local elders, living in their familiar environment, despite facing various problems with social support for home-based care due to factors like atomization and individualization, they received emotional support easily in

their familiar surroundings. Meanwhile, elderly migrants face multiple challenges in terms of dialects, incomes, living behaviors, and cognitive levels. If their children show signs of neglect or rejection during daily life, it will significantly increase the psychological pressures on the aging floaters, even if they choose to receive home-based care, they cannot obtain effective social support from family members. This group experiences remarkable financial, social, and daily care challenges that are difficult to articulate. Besides, the floating elderly often choose to shuttle between two places, bearing more physical and mental burdens.

Aging floaters in large city faced to multiple survival dimensions. Firstly, they often encounter difficulties in social integration. Due to their diverse cultural backgrounds and origins, the aging floaters often feel disconnected from the urban culture and lack a sense of belonging. Additionally, their limited social circle offered few opportunities to make new friends due to their age. Moreover, due to the high threshold for property ownership, most elderly parents from out of town lack of financial capacity to purchase their own property in large cities. There is also an income disparity between their hometowns and the higher living cost in large cities, making it difficult for them to afford the expensive rents. Consequently, they may end up renting substandard housing or living with their children, which in turn creates a host of problems leading to psychological stress. Furthermore, they also face the practical issues of seeking medical treatment in different location. Their changed lifestyle and environment may increase the risk of illness, yet inadequate medical insurance coverage may hinder their access to timely and effective healthcare. Additionally, the digital divide poses a significant challenge for the aging floaters. While urban life is increasingly digitized, there may be discrepancies between large cities and smaller towns or rural areas in terms of digital infrastructure and literacy. Consequently, elderly migrants may struggle to adapt to the digital aspects of urban life, leading to feelings of anxiety and insecurity.

### **2.3 Elderly Care Needs of Urban Population**

#### **Demands for Economic Support**

Unlike elders in rural areas who primarily rely on personal savings and family subsidies, most aging people in urban areas rely on pension and other social security incomes, and are more dependent on the pension payment ability of local government. As time passes, the dependency ratio of pension schemes will continue to rise. This will not only exacerbate the imbalance between pension revenues and expenditures, intensifying intergenerational redistribution conflicts, but also potentially put pressure on government fiscal expenditures in the field of aging care services.

From the perspective of individual and household consumption, despite the emergence of high-end aging services and personalized demands in “Silver Economy”, many elderly families are reluctant to pay for aging care services due to traditional conservative and thrifty consumption mentality as well as limited consumption capacity. They expect the government to assume more responsibility. At the same time, the imperfect consumption market environment and issues such as lack of trust also lead to a cautious attitude towards payment for professional services among some seniors.

These factors together result in the potential demand for elderly services not being effectively transformed into actual consumption.

### **Demands for Medical Support**

The need for medical care is a critical support requirement commonly mentioned by aging people during interviews. As age rises, irreversible declines in physical functions become inevitable. Maintaining a healthy status is not only a personal requirement for seniors but also a prerequisite for gaining social respect based on control over themselves' physical well-being. In society, disabled elderly or demented elderly face much greater life difficulties and social pressures than healthy people. They demonstrate a more significant substantive need for medical support during eldercare.

In large city, elderly population can be divided into two stages for opting home-based eldercare. Firstly, there's the stage between 60-75 years old, known as the 'active senior'. During this period, although individuals are considered elderly in terms of physiology and socially, they remain capable of working and earning a fixed income. Without severe illnesses or disabilities, these seniors are economically self-sufficient, requiring no external support. They enjoy relative freedom and vibrant lives. After the age of 75, aging people experience a noticeable decline in physiological functions, incapable of physical labor, thus formally requiring social support during homestay care. The classification of elderly individuals depends on their physical condition; some may be relatively young in age but suffer from poor health, thus receiving eldercare earlier. During homestay care stage, the necessity of social support leads to significant changes in the lifestyle and mental state of elderly individuals. While active seniors retain the freedom to manage their bodies and finances, planning their lives according to the demands of social need without restrictions; older individuals rely on social support, limiting their actions and the support they receive according to the dictates of the support provider. Additionally, the physical confines of apartment restrict direct interaction with the outside world, forcing reliance on technological means to communicate with the limited space available.

The elderly life is relatively simple, besides daily care, the necessity of social support is primarily reflected in prolonging lifespan and relieving mental stress for elders. For the elderly population engaging in eldercare at home, the purpose of various supports is to enable them to have a healthier life. On the basis of comprehensive medical needs, the provision of social support can ensure the physical and mental health of the elderly, thereby enabling them to integrate into society and enjoy a higher-quality life in their later years better. Interviewee HL is currently a senior expert in public institution, aged 50, and mostly lives with her parents, caring for her father who has Alzheimer's disease. The interviewee's father is now 84 years old and, before retirement, was a high-ranking military officer with a monthly pension of over 20,000 yuan, making him the respondent with the highest known pension during my fieldwork. HL stated that although her father's consciousness is not clear, due to the meticulous care and nursing provided by her family during homecare, as well as the assistance of various digital devices and advanced elderly care technologies, her father's current life quality is quite superior.



*HL: My Dad is earlier stage AD, he can still remember us, but often mixes up many things and needs constant repetition. So I talk to him every day, providing "verbal therapy" as it's known. I think high-quality companionship is crucial for elderly people, which is why I insist on personally caring for my parents. My brother and mother assist him with bathing, while I take care of wiping his body, soaking his feet, and giving him massages. I've even learned the basic rehabilitation techniques used in hospitals. For the past three years, I've spoken to him every day. When I'm out for work or other things I have to do, I'll play the radio or music for him. Our living room is equipped with a smart speaker, which allows him to listen to operas, his favorite music, or audiobooks. When I'm at home, we also watch sports competitions and discuss the athletes' stories and their spirit of perseverance on the TV or iPad. He understands these, and it helps his brain to worsen slowly. Nowadays, the technology for caring for Alzheimer's patients has become much more advanced than past. There are even instruments that can automatically assist patients in toileting. Everything is fully automated abroad, and our country will also see its widespread adoption in the coming years.*

With the continuous development of digital technology, nowadays information and communication technology has become an important way to solve the difficulties of elderly homecare, playing an irreplaceable role in improving the quality of life and physical health of them. On the one hand, the aging people generally suffers from geriatric diseases and chronic illnesses, which require long-term medication and regular outpatient check-ups. However, medical resources in large cities are scarce, and making appointments for medical treatments needs lots of time and attention. Hence, online medical consultations and diagnoses facilitated by information technology can greatly assist the seniors in meeting their daily healthcare needs. On the other hand, the continuous development and innovation of smart medical hardware, such as electric wheelchairs, intelligent bathrooms, smart mattresses, and other products, can greatly help the elderly in homecare by monitoring daily health data and providing digital support.

### **Psychological Needs for Empty Nesters**

Humanity is social beings. However, in large cities, many elderly individuals living at home are empty nesters. The term "living alone elderly" literally refers to aging people who live alone without children or other companions due to reasons such as widowhood or separation. In large cities, adults facing pressures of caring for both elderly and children are often in the prime of their careers, bearing the dual pressures of eldercare and childcare, and often lack the conditions to accompany their parents. These elders undergo a transformation in their societal roles after retirement, experiencing a shrinking social circle and often facing the situation of children living separately or even empty-nest households, resulting in a severe lack of emotional consolation. Leaving familiar work environments and subsequently narrowing social circles, coupled with the absence of younger generations due to their work or even childlessness, solitary seniors are prone to feelings of being forgotten by society. Urban seniors do not participate to social activities, making it difficult to fulfill the void of achievement left by retirement. Many solitary elderly individuals, due to advanced

age and limited mobility, have even lower rates of social activity participation, and some have no social interactions at all. Recent years, an increasing number of solitary elderly individuals have increased psychological issues due to loneliness, with severe cases even leading to suicide.

Psychological support is an important part of eldercare and an integral component of social support for the elderly population. As age and physiological functions decline, seniors who facing lack of care may experience feelings of helplessness, tension, and anxiety, leading to a series of emotional issues. If some of them suffer from illness, the uncertainty and anxiety about the future can gradually accumulate in the minds over time, thereby triggering serious psychological disorders.

In small towns or countryside, intimate interpersonal relationships among residents invisibly provide emotional value and emotional support to each other. By contrast, individuals in cities often have superficial relationships, even if they live in the same community, with interactions limited to casual greetings. Modernization also means competitive, where intense work competition compels young people to focus more on work, squeezing their time for caring and consoling the elderly, and increasing the economic and time costs of consolation[8]. The most direct manifestation of the lack of emotional support among the elderly is loneliness, anxiety, and insecurity. Many elderly individuals are criticized for being "irritable", "eccentric", or "paranoid", which are mostly influenced by inadequate social support.

### **3 Digital Support: the New Form of Social Support for Elderly Population in Large Cities**

Urban elders, as active individuals in the ever-changing society, exhibit diverse needs when facing the challenges of eldercare. These personalized needs are gradually shaping the pattern and structure of urban home-care systems to some extent. These demands include not only expectations from personal social network members such as children and relatives but also calls for socialized elderly care services.

They are influenced by both traditional and modern ideologies. They identify with the traditional value of relying on children for eldercare, believing that being supported by offspring at home is the standard form of eldercare. They perceive that living in nursing home would isolate them from emotional connections with their descendants, tarnishing their children's reputation, and thus, it is not the best option for them. At the same time, they are deeply influenced by modernization trends, believing that individuals should live for themselves and pursue freedom and independence. Although many urban elders have rigid demands for economic support, daily care, and emotional consolation, they consider paying for help from society as an overlooked option. They are also reluctant to disturb their children's work and lives. Therefore, they can only silently bear all the difficulties of home-care.

Such practices show contradictory to outsiders, yet they are precisely the genuine manifestations of their home-care life. Without delving into the living conditions of urban elders, it is difficult for us to have a clear understanding of their choose. The average economic status of urban seniors is indeed higher than rural areas or third-

and fourth-tier cities. However, the high cost of living, urgent medical needs, the need for emotional support, and the pervasive digital impact make their eldercare life fraught with challenges and difficulties.

In summary, social support especially digital support plays a crucial role in the home-care life and psychological status of the elderly population in large cities. Social support not only provides essential living materials and medical assistance to the elderly population but also satisfies their sense of self-accomplishment and promotes social interactions, thereby affecting their mental health. When families lack external support to provide the aforementioned assistance, digital support can effectively substitute for family members in providing partial eldercare services. When the support provided by traditional family members is relatively limited, digital elderly care facilities, platforms, and software can effectively complement these resources.

## 4 Conclusion

The issue of elderly care in large cities encompasses both the traditional ethics of society and the new structural forms of modern families, making it a subject worthy of in-depth exploration and detailed examination. Although on the surface, the problem of home-based elderly care in urban areas may seem trivial, it holds significant importance in the context of urban family life. The ability of elderly individuals to receive care from family members, as well as the extent to which social support can be integrated into home-based care, raises important questions about the integration of elderly care services. These issues are crucial not only for the dignity and harmony of the elderly population but also for the long-term stability and peace of society. Therefore, it is imperative to more earnestly and proactively scrutinize the issue of home-based elderly care in large cities.

This paper outlines the reasons why home-based elderly care groups in large cities require social support, as well as the changes and new demands in filial relationships within the modern family ethic. Originally embedded within family structures and processes, care giving behaviors have been extricated by the modern family system. These behaviors are now re-incorporated into a market-oriented, scientific, and professional care giving system by the state, market, and expert systems. This shift necessitates the entrance of social support into the family environment to assume responsibility for the elder's care. However, the emergence of empty-nest and smaller family structures, along with the deep-seated beliefs among the elderly population regarding care, presents significant challenges for integrating social support into the family environment. This paper argues that digital technology can effectively address the insufficient penetration of social support into home-based elderly care. As a supplementary pathway, digital support can effectively alleviate the current dilemmas of elderly care in large cities.

Despite the current lack of widespread societal acceptance, digital support in home-based elderly care is poised to become an increasingly prominent and unavoidable trend for families. Looking forward, there will also be a growing diversification of home-based elderly care models.

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