

Smart cities and disability

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Background: With growing urban populations, inclusive and accessible urban spaces become increasingly important, particularly for disability affected persons. At the same time, smart cities and related digital applications provide emerging opportunities for urban health advances. However, the extent to which smart city applications consider or even fulfill the needs of individuals with disabilities, remains underexplored. This paper therefore aims to provide an overview about the existing literature on the interplay of smart cities and disability to identify gaps and opportunities for future research and policy development.

Methods: We applied a scoping review in PubMed and Scopus using predefined search terms related to smart cities, smart citizens, and disability. The inclusion criteria encompassed articles in English between 2014 and 2024.

Results and Discussion: There is a growing interest in smart city applications and their potential impact on disability inclusion. Key themes identified include app-based assessments of physical barriers, digital interventions for accessibility, participatory design approaches, and challenges in implementation and adoption. The literature also highlights notable gaps in terms of equity, representation, and policy engagement in this context. While technological advancements hold promise for enhancing accessibility and quality of life for individuals with disabilities, there is a crucial need for more inclusive and participatory approaches and for policy engagement. Future research should focus on bridging the gap between smart city strategies and the lived experiences and needs of people with disabilities, with an emphasis on promoting equity, empowerment, and social justice within urban environments.

Keywords: Disability, accessibility, digital platforms, social media, smart city

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